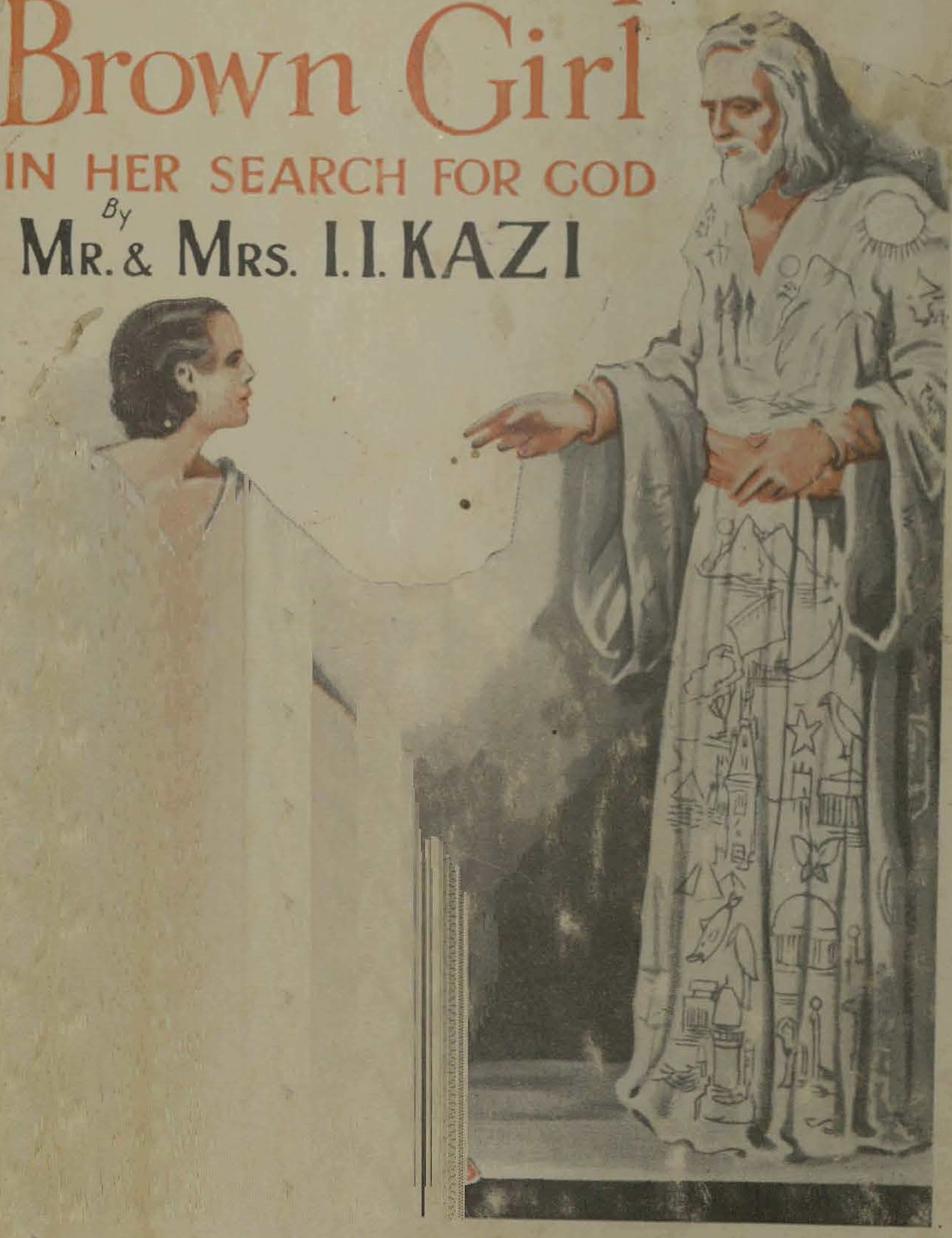
Adventures of the Brown Girl

IN HER SEARCH FOR GOD

By

MR. & MRS. I. I. KAZI



ADVENTURES OF THE BROWN GIRL IN HER SEARCH FOR GOD



Allama & Mrs. I. I. Kazi

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This book "Adventures of the Brown Girl in her Search for God" is second volume of the writings and speeches of Late Allama I. I. Kazi and Mrs. I. I. Kazi, which the Sindhi Adabi Board, Hyderabad had undertaken to publish in a series of volumes. In the year 1965, the Board had appointed a Committee of Compilers, consisting of (1) Dr. N. A. Baloch, Director, Institute of Education, University of Sind, (2) Dr. A. J. Halepota, Head of the Department of Comparative Religion & Islamic Culture, University of Sind, (3) Mr. Shafi Muhammad Memon, Reader, Institute of Education, University of Sind, (4) Dr. phil. N. B. G. Qazi, Professor & Head of the Department of Persian, University of Sind, and (5) Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim M. Joyo, the then Honorary Secretary, the Sindhi Adabi Board to collect and compile material for publication. The first volume of Allama Sahib's speeches and writings entitled "Casual Peeps at Sophia" was published by the Board, last year, in the life time of the learned author, who passed away in April, 1968. As per his will, the printing and publication of the remaining writings and speeches will be managed by Mr. A.K. Brohi, President, Allama I. I. Kazi Memorial Society.

The publishers express their gratitude to Mr. A. K. Brohi for his scholarly 'Introduction' to this book. As desired by the late Allama, the order followed in

this edition is based on the first edition of the book, issued by Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd., London and its printing work was supervised by Mr. Ghulam Rabbani A. Agro, Assistant Secretary, the Sindhi Adabi Board and Mr. Muhammad Hassan Bhutto, Lecturer, University of Sind, jointly.

Hyderabad
Dated 16-12-1968

Dr. Asadullah Shah Hussaini
Honorary Secretary,
The Sindhi Adabi Board.

INTRODUCTION

"Adventures of the Brown Girl in her Search for God", as the sub-title of the book indicates, is a companion volume of, and has to be read along with, "The Black Girl in Search of God" written by Bernard Shaw.

Mr. Shaw's book to which the present book is an answer from the Moslem point of view, was first published by Constable & Company Limited (London) under the title of "Adventures of the Black Girl in Search for God" late in the year 1932. Afterwards, that book has been published under a shorter title, *viz*. "The Black Girl in Search of God", by Panguin Books Ltd., together with some lesser tales. Mr. & Mrs. I. I. Kazi published the "Adventures of Brown Girl" as a reply to Mr. Shaw's book in the year 1933.

(1)

It is essential to the proper understanding of the present book that reference be made to the general argument which is contained in Mr. Shaw's book concerning the validity of certain religious beliefs and practices as these have been consecrated by the universal tradition of mankind. Mr. Shaw was inspired by the theory of biological "Evolution" as it was advanced by the writers on that subject in the early part of the twentieth century and, indeed, his greatest dramatic work "Back to Matheselah" (1921) was inspired by the teachings of a school of philosophy hat goes by the name of "Creative Evolution". His

earlier play "Man and Superman" (1901-3) reflected a philosophy of life which was sharply in conflict with the one to which Neo-Darwinians had subscribed. The difference between the two rival philosophies, that is, between Neo-Darwinianism and Creative Evolution may be concisely stated thus: The Neo-Darwinians believed that the evolution is proceeding mechanically in that it is by some "chance" variation, that a given species puts forward new apparatus of response which *happens* to enable it to be better adjusted to the environmental necessities and thus enables it to survive. From this point of view, human improvement, for instance, "is a function of some senseless accident which must, on the statistical average of accidents, be presently wiped out by some other equally senseless accident". But according to those who subscribe to the theory of "Creative Evolution", the impulse that produces evolution is creative, that is to say, that that impulse *can and does, at a certain pitch of intensity, set up by the conviction of its necessity, create and organise new tissue to do it with.* In the words of Shaw "If the weight lifter under the trivial stimulus of an athletic competition can put up a muscle it seems reasonable to believe that any equally earnest and convinced philosopher could put up a brain. Both are directions of energy to a certain end. Evolution shows us this direction of vitality doing all sorts of things: providing the centipedes with a hundred legs and ridding the fish of any leg at all; building legs and arms for the land and the gills and fins for the sea, enabling the mammal to gestate its young inside

its body and the fowl to incubate hers outside it; offering us, we may say, our choice of any sort of bodily contrivance to maintain our activity and increase our resources." (See his Preface to "Back to Mathuselah").

As applied to religion, the hypothesis of creative evolution leads Mr. Shaw to certain conclusions which seem to put the age-long institution of religion, as conventionally understood, into contempt and disrepute. By and large, the Black Girl of Mr. Bernard Shaw's creation, at the end of her adventures, reaches the dismal conclusion that the institutionalised religion is irrelevant and, although she encounters practically all the pioneers of great religions of the world in her adventures, she has no use for the teachings of any one of them: indeed, she is made to scoff at them. Eventually, she settles down to the life of a gardener in a garden that was being cultivated "by a wizened old gentleman whose eyes were so striking that his face seemed all eyes, his nose so remarkable that his face seemed all nose, and his mouth so expressive of a comically malicious relish that his face seemed all mouth until the Black Girl combined these three incompatibles by deciding that his face was all intelligence." There is to be found in Mr. Shaw's Book the following record of conversation between her and this old gentleman which may be said to epitomise quintessence of Bernard Shaw's teaching about the pragmatic value of search for God.

> "Come in" said the old gentleman. "I have found, after a good deal of consideration, that the

best place to seek God is in a garden. You can, dig for Him here."

"That is not my idea of seeking for God at all," said the Black Girl, disappointed. "I will go on, thank you."

"Has your own idea, as you call it, led you to Him yet?"

"No," said the Black Girl, stopping: "I cannot say that it has. But I do not like your idea."

"Many people who have found God have not liked Him and have spent the rest of their lives running away from Him. Why do you suppose you would like Him?"

"I do not know" said the Black Girl. "But the missionary has a line of poetry that says that we needs must love the highest when we see it."

"That poet was a fool" said the old gentleman. "We hate it; we crucify it; we poison it with hemlock; we chain it to a stake and burn it alive. All my life I have striven in my little way to do God's work and teach His enemies to laugh at themselves; but if you told me "God was coming down the road I should creep into the nearest mousehole and not care to breathe until He had passed. For if He saw me or smelt me, might He not, put His foot on me and squelch me, as I could squelch any venomous little thing that broke my commandments? These fellows who run after God crying 'Oh that I knew where I might find Him' must have a tremendous opinion of themselves to think that they could stand before Him. Has the

missionary ever told you the story of Jupiter and Semele?"

"No," said the Black Girl. "What is the story?"

"Jupiter is one of the names of God" said the old gentleman. "You know that He has many names, dont' you?"

"The last man I met called him Allah" she said

"Just so", said the old gentleman. "Well, Jupiter fell in love with Semele, and was considerate enough to appear and behave just like a man to her. But she thought herself good enough to be loved by a god in all the greatness of his godhood. So she insisted on his coming to her in the full panoply of His divinity."

"What happened when He did?" asked the Black Girl.

"Just what she might have known would happen if she had had any sense" said the old gentleman. "She shrivelled up and cracked like a flee in the fire. So take care. Do not be a fool like Semele. God is at your elbow, and he has been there all the time; but in His divine mercy he has not revealed Himself to you lest too full of knowledge of Him should drive you mad. Make a little garden for yourself; dig and plant and weed and prune; and be content if he jogs your elbow when you are gardening unskilfully, and blesses you when you are gardening well."

"And shall we never be able to bear His full presence?" said the Black Girl.

> "I trust not" said the old philosopher. "For we shall never be able to bear His full presence until we have fulfilled all His purposes and become gods ourselves. But as His purposes are infinite, and we are most briefly finite, we shall never, thank God, be able to catch up with His purposes. So much the better for us. If our work were done we should be of no further use; that would be the end of us; for He would hardly keep us alive for the pleasure of looking at us, ugly and ephemeral insects as we are. Therefore come in and help to cultivate this garden to His glory. The rest you had better leave to Him."

Soon after she settles down to doing the work of a gardener, the Black Girl meets "a red-haired Irishman labouring in the back-garden where they grew the kitchen stuff". The reader can well identify the red-haired Irishman to be no other person than Shaw himself. The Adventures of the Black Girl eventually end in her marriage with the "red-haired Irishman" and the Book is concluded upon the following note:

> "So they were married; and the Black Girl managed the Irishman and the children (who were charmingly coffee-coloured) very capably and even came to be quite fond of them. Between them and the garden and mending her husband's clothes (which she could not persuade him to leave off wearing) she was kept so busy that her search for God was crowded out of her head most of the time; but there were moments, especially when she was drying her favourite piccaninny, who was

very docile and quiet, after his bath, in which her mind went back to her search; only now she saw how funny it was that an unsettled girl should start off to pay God a visit, thinking herself the centre of the universe, and taught by the missionary to regard God as somebody who had nothing better to do than to watch everything she did and worry Himself about her salvation. She even tickled the piccaninny and asked him 'Suppose I had found God at home what should I have done when he hinted that I was staying too long and that he had other things to attend to'? It was a question which the Piccaninny was quite unable to answer: he only chuckled hysterically and tried to grab her wrists. It was only when the piccaninny grew up and became independent of her, the Irishman had become an unconscious habit of hers, as if he were a part of herself, that they ceased to take her away from herself and she was left once more with the leisure and loneliness that threw her back on such questions. And by that time her strengthened mind had taken her far beyond the stage at which there is any fun in smashing idols with knobkerries."

(2)

Mr. & Mrs. I. I. Kazi, as a counter point to this cynical mode of regarding the institution of Religion, offer a clear-cut account of the main characteristics of the Evolution of Religious Belief and Practice as one sees them in the light of history and psychology.

Theirs is an scholarly approach. When carefully read the various "adventures" of the Brown Girl turn out to be the main landmarks that one sees in the historical unfolding of the religious ideal of mankind. As the painting on the dust cover of the Book would show, "Brown Girl" is being talked to by history personified. And indeed the only other discipline in the light of which the reader is invited to comprehend the grammar of religious development is the science of psychology. Our authors draw a great deal upon psychological data for explaining the principal phases of the development of man's religious consciousness. History and Psychology,—these constitute the only court of appeal at the altar of which our authors surrender the thought-processes of the Brown Girl and get her to pass through the variegated religious experiences in order to enable her to grasp the fundamental truth, *viz.*,—there are not religions but only one Religion. The various religions in the history of mankind merely have been construed as different modes in which the different peoples of the world at different times have been taught by the Prophets of universal religion how best to serve the needs of their deeper nature and thus to advance the evolution of human race. "There has been a Book for every period which reveals the Divine Will and the law for the same particular period, till again another book is received." (See p. 55 and onwards for this line of thought). Religious development of man has thus been treated in an evolutionary perspective. Revealed Scriptures are shown to be a device on the

part of the Divine Spirit to educate the son of man and bring him to a point of maturity when he could be expected to take up the problem of his own evolution in his own hand. This is achieved by the presentation to the reader of the imaginative reconstruction of the principal stages in the development of religious consciousness of mankind till the Brown Girl at the end of her search, encounters Prophet Muhammad (may peace be on him) who delivers to her the *last message*. "This message is *final* because the Book that contains it is not a book of *commandments* but of *discretions* and *discriminations* and it advises a different kind of method by which each man will receive revelation individually and will have no need of those periodic revelations which have been coming now and again. Man is grown up now; there is no more "thou shalt" for him nor "thou shalt not"; but the Book points out to him two broad ways and he is to choose between the two with his own will and woe unto him if he chooses the wrong one. Man and woman are now free to choose, but so much more responsible." (See page 56).

Indeed, the "Adventures" of the Brown Girl in her Search for God are to be viewed as a commentary on the contention of the Holy Quoran to the effect that *all religions are aspects of one primordal and fundamental truth and that the believer is therefore to be called upon to accept all the prophets and all the Books they have brought to mankind without so much as authorising the believer to draw distinction between any one of them.* As demonstrated by our authors in

the Book, the Brown Girl is made to pass through various phases of religious development and is thus inwardly prepared to receive the dispensation sanctioned by the last perfected manifestation of religion, namely, Islam. At the conference of the various religious prophets that has been improvised by the authors to explain the significance of the contribution which the message of each of them was designed to make in the history of religious development, the short speech of the last Prophet (which could be seen at p.111 of the book) points out the significance of the historical role of Islam. The last Prophet's message is thus exhibited to be *the affirmation of all previous religious leaders of makind*—some of the names of those prophets have been mentioned in the Holy Book and there are others whose names have not been mentioned therein. Islam is described as the culmination of religious development of mankind and under its aegis Religion has been perfected—much in the manner in which a flower or a fruit is the culmination of the life of the plant that had started its career from the seed that had been sown in the earth.

And to the pointed request of the Brown Girl which she asks after the speech of the last Prophet is over: "I have not found God yet" History makes the following answer. In the words of our authors:

> "History laughed aloud 'Human-child is perverse' he said. "After all this you have not realised that the last consummation and the last act of universe is to see God.

"You have forgotten that you already had glimpses of God, although those of the groper who gets them through the sense of touch. It is just those glimpses in one form or the other that have sustained all life and make it progress towards its goal.

"Realisation, my child, Realisation, which means obtaining nearer and nearer, profounder and profounder glimpses of God till He is seen in full glory."

Islam thus, regarded as the perfected expression of Divine Guidance, inaugurates the Era of Realization as contradistinguished from the pre-Islamic religious development which too was brought about through the deliverance of Revealed truth. The Holy Quoran, as remarked earlier, is anyhow not a book in the nature of scriptures that prescribe ten commandments. It is verily a *Furquan*—that is, a book that sets forth, a graded scale of values and invites us to attain moral, material and spiritual excellence by means of our *freely* exercised choices. We are so to act within the limits prescribed by the Divine Law that we are able to side with the forces of goodness and resist the forces of evil.

If evolution is at all to have any meaning, man must be regarded as a being in the making as distinguished from a being created as a finished product. How is man then to evolve in the desirable direction, becomes thus an all-important question. Islam says he can evolve to higher status if he *freely were*

to elect to live his life on earth with an eye on that divine and distant goal of winning that life which is better and eternal. The life of senses, of biological instincts is not to be despised—for there is no monkery in Islam—but is to be made a means for transcending their claims and demands. No wonder, the Quoran says:

> "We have created death and life in order to test who of you excels in the performance of beautiful deeds." (See chapter 67, V. 2).

Man has been sent down to serve His Lord and Master who created him in the best of forms and who has endowed him with authority over the rest of creation. He is here to work—to serve the earth, to convert, as Carlyle used to say, this brown Earth of God into Green. He is to do all his work in the Name of God who is Merciful and Beneficent. Life of man on earth thus provides to him an opportunity to evolve in the direction of an *angelic life:* his time here-below becomes the seed-plot for cultivating those seeds of good deeds which are ultimately to yield to him the harvest of eternal life; in this image it also becomes an arena in which his stamina for enjoining the good and resisting the evil are going to be tested.

(3)

In this perspective of things, one might well ask: "What, then, is the difference between the point of view with which the Black Girl and the Brown Girl react to the most challenging question with which they found themselves confronted," *viz.*, "Where is God?"

The Black Girl found the solution of her problem in cultivating a garden, that is, in doing *some work on earth.* The Brown Girl, on the other hand, after listening the last Prophet *becomes a believer in God.* What is the relative value of these two approaches?

To begin with, if redemption through the gospel of work is to come, one must ask Bernard Shaw to tell us whether or not he at all finds any distinction between the work of a gardener who ploughs the land in an attempt to convert the brown earth of God into green, and the work, let us say, of a criminal who sets out to disrupt the public peace and subvert the foundations of moral order. Apparently, from Shaw's point of view there ought to be no distinction valid in principle, between one type of work and another. "Creative Evolution" cannot define for us the difference that there is between *moral* and *immoral* deeds. But, then, mankind has, down the ages, drawn a distinction between several types of work—some being regarded as right and good, others being treated as wrong and evil. How will Shaw draw such a distinction in terms of the evolutionary principle? How is the work of, let us say, a bee collecting honey, a bird building a nest, a spider weaving his web, in any way different from that of a man, who, let us say, in his role as a mason cuts the stones and builds a cathedral. The answer must be that in man the impulse to work is informed by the kind of *ethical consciousness* with which he labours—it all depends upon the *spirit* in which he works.

From the view-point of "creative evolution", a hypothesis upon which Mr. Bernard Shaw builds his religious castles, it would appear that there is no clue in terms of which any satisfactory answer to this and such other questions can at all be rendered. It is no doubt true that Bernard Shaw quite justifiably qualifies the Black Girl's commitment to gardening by getting the keeper of the garden to remark that she is "to cultivate the garden to *His Glory and of course the rest she had better leave to Him*." The question is: Is it possible to expect any one cultivating the garden to do so in His Holy Name and for His Glory without in some manner being *convinced that He exists* and further that it is His Law that man will redeem himself only by labouring in His Holy Name and for His Glory?

That, then, is the root of the matter: all secularistic philosophies would seem to agree with Islam in that like Islam they too enjoin upon man the supreme duty of fulfilling himself by working on Earth. But Islam goes further: it insists that work is not enough if it be not done in obedience to the Will of God. It is by surrendering at the altar of God's Will that man fulfils himself—so that not man's but God's Will be done. Whereas Islam affirms the existence of the Divine Presence by referring us to accept God as one "who hath no equal" *on the authority of the prophetic revelation*, secularistic philosophers, whether they take their stand on materialistic or positivistic or nihilistic grounds have no such trans-historic reference within the framework of their assumptions, to the existence

of the Eternal and Abiding Divine Presence of the kind to which Islam makes a pointed reference.

This, then, is the great dividing wall between the religious outlook of a believer and the non-religious outlook of the nihilistic philosophers: the religious outlook demands compliance with God's Will—by means of heroic, noble and dignified affirmation of man's paramount need to labour for causes that have a transcendental reach. All those philosophies that deny the validity of religious hypothesis nevertheless emphasise man's commitment to labour on earth. They do not and indeed consistently with their findings they cannot, tell us *why* man should sacrifice himself at the altar of history or why he should labour for the realization of values and ideals whose fruition he may not see in his own life-time. If man is no more than matter and motion, he has nothing to hope for beyond the day when his life on earth will have been done. So *why* should he sacrifice the only life he has, merely because after he is gone, the community to which he belongs, would be the gainer? Besides all this, while the believer acts in order to fulfil the law of his being, the materialist acts in order to achieve that which, on the premises of materialistic interpretation of history, anyhow is fated to come to a pass. If man's consciousness is not *sui juris*, autonomous and an aspect of Divine Life in him but a mere concomitant condition, so that he is no more than a reflex activity of environmental matter and motion—how can *he* at all *act much less influence the course of history*?

Similarly, Dr. Robert Briffault (yet another Evolutionist) who too reaches the conclusion that the highest ideal for man to strive for is to progressively assist in the realisation of the evolutionary ends, finds it difficult to explain *why* man should at all waste his time in advancing the evolutionary ends. And what, anyhow, is the burden of man's evolution? According to him, it *is the making of humanity*. And that is, according to Dr. Briffault "a solid thing, somewhat hard fact of which the 'moral law' gives a vividly conscious expression. It is no throbbing impulse of altruism, no consideration of generosity for its own sake but a heavy weight of necessity laid upon man's development by the unbending conditions that govern it. And the supremacy, the paramount character of morality corresponds to the overshadowing magnitude of the evolutionary tasks which it expresses and of the difficulties that beset it. The questions and problems comprised under the terms of 'ethics' and 'morality' are no other than the problems arising from that task. The necessity of ethical consideration is no other than the hard necessity of adaptation to facts as they are. Then in the relation between man and man and others which are not adopted to actual facts, the unadapted result is failure, the adapted is evolutionary growth and life." (See his *Making of Humanity*, p. 261, George Allen Unwin, London, 1919).

Surely, the deduction of moral imperative from a perception of evolutionary ends of the type Dr. Briffault has in mind, is no more than a *pretext* to

secure man's conformity to the demand of the moral order. The question, however, remains and has to be answered: *Why* should *I* conform to the ethical imperatives? According to Dr. Briffault, the answer is that if I do not, the community or the nation to which I belong will, as a result of my failure to conform to the moral injunctions, be inevitably impoverished, atrophied and eventually exterminated. He concedes that it is not necessary that in this process *I* will be punished. He concedes further that an individual can violate moral law with impunity, and indeed cases of persons who have violated the injunctions of the moral law going unpunished right to the end of their days is not an unknown phenomenon. The sole sanction of morality, therefore, according to him, lies in the fact that defiance of moral law would eventually bring about the destruction of that larger synthesis, *viz.*, the organic life of humanity. If this is all that there is to it, how will you persuade an avowedly immoral person to give up the practice of morality merely on the ground that the chances of the community or nation to which he belongs being destroyed will be greater as a consequence of his immorality. Such a person may well remark—"What do I care, after me the deluge".

(4)

The religious view, as it has been advanced by Islam, at least takes a consistent position upon this question, in that it enjoins *firstly that obedience to the moral law is in strict accord with the demand of*

human nature, and secondly that the sanction behind the observance of moral practice ultimately is traceable to religious belief in the eternality of the Preserver of the moral order. So that if not *here*, then *elsewhere*, all derelictions of moral duty will be punished and that accounts of all concerned will be audited with merciless severity.

Bernard Shaw himself did not know how to get rid of the relevance of this type of religious belief. All through his several prefaces to various religious plays like "Back to Mathuselah", "Androcles and the Lion", "Saint Joan" and even in his preface to the Adventures of a Black Girl in Her Search for God, he returns over and over again (in order to satisfy the *need* man unavoidably feels, both within the framework of his individual life as even for the sustenance of economic and political and social order) to the significant role that the religious hypothesis plays in the resolution of those conflicts and dilemmas which are apt to disrupt the foundations of orderly functioning of the social organism to which he belongs. Of course, the religious hypothesis to which Shaw subscribes and of which he speaks so eloquently is no other than what is described by him as a *religion of metaphysical vitalism*. In his words:

> "Since the discovery of Evolution as the method of the Life Force, the religion of metaphysical Vitalism has been gaining the definiteness and concreteness needed to make it assimilable by the educated critical man. But it has always been with us. The popular religions, disgraced by

their opportunist cardinals and bishops, have been kept in credit by canonised saints whose secret was their conception of themselves as the instruments and vehicles of divine power and aspiration: a conception which at moments becomes an actual experience of ecstatic possession by that power. And above and below all have been millions of humble and obscure persons, sometimes totally illiterate, sometimes unconscious of having any religion at all, sometimes believing in their simplicity that the gods and temples and priests of their district stood for their instinctive righteousness, who have kept sweet the tradition that good people follow a light that shines within and above and ahead of them, that bad people care only for themselves, and that the good are saved and blessed and the bad damned and miserable. Protestantism was a movement towards the pursuit of a light called an inner light because every man must see it with his own eyes and not take any priest's word for it or any Church account of it. In short, there is no question of a new religion, but rather of redistilling the eternal spirit of religion and thus extricating it from the sludgy residue of temporalities and legends that are making belief impossible, though they are the stock-in-trade of all the Churches and all the Schools."

It is curious, is it not, that Shaw should reach the conclusion that there *is no question of a new religion but rather of redistilling the eternal spirit of religion and thus extricating it from the sludgy residue of*

temporalities and legends that are making belief impossible,—precisely the task that the last Messenger of God accomplished by giving to mankind the Holy Book which too claims that it has not brought a new religion so much as has distilled the grand tradition of religious belief in one God, a tradition which had been adulterated by scheming priests of pre-Islamic religions. And what is more important, the extent to which the Last Messenger was prepared to tolerate the several religious points of view attributable to diversity of religious belief and practice, is practically unprecedented. It was he who taught mankind for the first time to say that there is no compulsion in religion. He further taught all of us to say that *your* God and *my* God is one God and for you are *your* acts and for me are *my* acts. He said to the believers: "Do not abuse the false God of heretics, lest they abuse your true God."

Catholicity of Moslem ideal is thus practically unbounded. Witness the following in the Holy Quoran:

> "And We have revealed to thee the Book with the truth, *verifying* that which is before it of the Book and a guardian over it, so judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their low desires (turning away) from the truth that has come to thee. For every one of you We appointed a law and a way. And if Allah had pleased He would have made you a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you.

So vie with one another in virtuous deeds. To Allah you will all return, so He will inform you of that wherein you differed:" (Chap. V, V. 48).

(5)

Why was the "Black Girl" denied by as astute a writer as Shaw the privilege of subscribing to the mission of the last Prophet—the more so when she actually does settle down to cultivate the garden to His glory, a commitment which would have pleased the Prophet? Perchance the answer is that the manifesto of Islam and its programme has been accepted in at least superficial terms by the whole world—although its spirit has, as yet, not been properly seen and understood. Hence the never-ending complications, contradictions in which modern man has been involved.

Mr. and Mrs. I. I. Kazi have attempted to emphasise the all-important truth: What a man *does* is important but only to the extent it is done in the spirit and manner taught by the Prophet of Islam.

(6)

The English reviewers of "Adventures of the Brown Girl in Her Search for God" had classified the book as falling within the category of Philosophical books, although more precisely stated, the appropriate category should have been that of "Comparative Religion". Of course, reflections on the course of religious development of mankind contained in the

book have philosophic implications but then they are stated in a rather sketchy, cryptic and summary form as mere hints, without any attempt at elaboration of the philosophical basis upon which those observations are based. Nevertheless, the presentation of problems connected with the study of comparative religion has been attempted in an evolutionary setting and any serious student who wishes to make a close study of our authors' book is sure to find in it some original ideas and striking insights concerning the subject of "Comparative Religion".

(7)

Allama I. I. Kazi had often expressed to the writer of this Introduction his keenness to write a sequel to the Adventures of the Brown Girl. This was to be a book in which he wanted to present the day-to-day life that the Brown Girl leads after she becomes a believer in the truth and significance of Moslem religious teachings as a result of her encounter with history. The Allama Sahib had always in mind the thought that by writing this type of a sequel to the Adventures of the Brown Girl, he would be able to show in meticulous detail the grandeur and majesty of the religion of Islam—a religion that had, according to his way of thought, inaugurated the era of realisation of the truths that had been revealed to mankind on the basis of last Prophet's message. He wanted to show in a concrete manner how, in particular, the Brown Girl proceeds to implement the exhortations, admonitions and injunctions of the Holy Quoran in her

day-to-day life. He wanted further to describe how she sets out to observe the *signs of God in Nature and within herself and* arrive at the *realisation* that God of mankind is one God—transcendant to the universe yet nevertheless immanent in it. The kind of life that Islam enjoins upon us was to have been reflected in the way in which the Brown Girl was made to live her life. This was to be a life of total surrender to God's Law and dedicated solely to the end that His Purposes should come to prevail in human history. But, unfortunately, that work which he so ardently wanted to accomplish, did not see the light of the day and is not available to us. Instead, there are some stray thoughts and jottings which I have been able to recover from some of the papers that he has left behind for me and these I shall, God willing, be able to edit and organise subject-wise just to be able to present his understanding of the teachings of Islam in a comprehensive setting. Islam, as our author Allama Kazi saw it, had all the necessary answers to all those dilemmas which even today seem to confront the best of our thinkers of the mid-twentieth century and in regard to which, alas, they do not have any worthwhile solutions.

(8)

Altogether, Adventures of the Brown Girl is a remarkable book indeed: it is simple and yet profound; it is original and striking despite the fact that it deals with an age-old theme of the validity and the relevance of religious belief and practice. Its republication,

now after the course of these 35 years that have intervened since the day when it was first printed by Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd. (28, Ludgate Hill, E.C. 4) is called for now that, we in this dear land of ours have pledged ourselves to pursue the Islamic ideal as it has been revealed to us in the Holy Book, in the example of the Prophet and in a vast mass of the writings of that long line of distinguished Moslem thinkers, philosophers and sages who have down these 14 hundred years meditated upon it. In this impressive array of the great savants and sages of Islam, Mr. & Mrs. I. I. Kazi, in the considered opinion of the present writer, occupy a unique position; indeed, they have had the background of both the Eastern and the Western thought and what is more their whole life was lived in an earnest endeavour to grasp the essentials of the religion of Islam.

12*th October*, 1968. *A. K. Brohi*
75-76 Moslemabad, Karachi.
Pakistan.

ADVENTURES OF THE BROWN GIRL IN HER SEARCH FOR GOD

"WHERE is God?" said the brown girl to the one-eyed beggar-woman, who had a matchbox in her hand and a "God bless you" upon her lip.

It was always the same. Whenever the brown girl stepped out of her two seater Rolls-Royce, she found this woman at her flat-door with an underfed little girl by her side.

As usual, she fumbled in her handbag in search of a small silver coin, and, as usual, she found no available change.

She looked very beautiful in her scarlet frock and the daring little hat tilted on her jet-black hair. Her ivory skin was smooth and silky, and her dark eyes full of spirit. She was the only daughter of an Eastern potentate of fabulous wealth, whose head-quarters were at the Ritz, and whose only craze was breeding pedigree dogs. She herself owned a gorgeous flat in Mayfair, wherein she could study, revel and sin. She was the leading light of a bright young set of her fellow-students at the University where she studied history and economics.

Today her head felt like a Catherine-wheel. The cocktail party of the previous night had left her completely enervated; notwithstanding that they had given her a champagne bath (of course, of her own

providing), just after she had finished dancing a la Anny Fligg, the famous German dancer.

The boys' business was to feed and stimulate her with flattery and flirtation, borrow money from her and never return it; and that of the girls was, never to forget to say: "Oh, how lovely, it's just what I wanted," when costly presents were showered upon them.—Friends, she had really none. Miss West, whom they called "The White Girl," because she was a platinum blonde, at one time had posed as her friend when she herself had been in need of her support.

The brown girl had substantially helped her. In fact, it was due to her that Miss West was able to graduate in economics and finance. But now, although she sometimes attended her parties, her real friends were business and sport.

There was also one girl from Africa—the black girl, who had been a student of divinity in her own way, and her sincere friend. But she had married an Irishman and given up her studies, and since then she saw very little of her.

Almost every evening the brown girl gave a party at her flat to this host of parasites, who were entirely agreed on two points: that their hostess was perfectly charming, and that there was no God except the Atom. They were also certain that the atoms had only come together by a fortuitous concourse, and could certainly not be credited even with gregariousness. Their jostling about, too, was more of a bullying sort; and that, they said, was the beginning of the struggle of life.

The only law that ever governed the situation was, that you may by all means steal, if you only could get away with it. So long as your neighbour was in the dark, it did not matter what you did against him. Besides, if you could blow your own trumpet loud enough, it would drown a good many small voices. A little propaganda was sufficient to lead the big donkey of the public by the nose.

Were not all the scientists agreed that the earth was round? So it must be a melon, and the only need was to possess sharp incisors and canines and specially good grinders; and the only talent necessary, was to know how to bite.

The question of right or wrong did not arise.

The brown girl had to subscribe to this creed, as the greatest sin was to be out of fashion.

No one had taught her different. Her mother she had hardly seen. Her nurses had spoken to her of "Allah" the Merciful. But since she had come to Europe the very name "Allah" had not recurred to her mind. It was only at times when at night she suddenly woke up, that she felt afraid— afraid of everything; afraid even of her own self; and in the depth of her soul felt a loneliness and a hunger for something she could not quite understand.

Apologising to the match-seller, she now entered her flat. Her two maids flew to welcome her.

"I don't want to be disturbed till 6 o'clock."

So saying, she closed the door of her room, and dropping into the silk cushions of her divan, she closed her eyes and whispered sleepily: "Where is God?"

"I will show him to you," said a voice beside her. She turned round and saw before her a tall man with a stern face and a hoary head. He wore a fantastic gown, all over embroidered and painted with animals, trees, mountains and seas; hosts of men and women at war, at peace, and at love-making; crowds of children; strange temples, processions of priests, and pageants of kings and queens.

"Who are you?" asked the brown girl, suspecting that perhaps he had stepped out of the last coach of the carousel.

"I am History," he replied, with slightly relaxed face, and continued: "there are so many false personations of me stalking the earth. Fools believe in them, but knaves love them."

"What has that to do with God?" asked the brown girl.

"Everything," replied the man. "Were you not told that I am a sign of God? If you have lost your way, follow me."

The brown girl jumped up. She felt her eyes now wide open. For a minute she hesitated; it was getting dark. She glanced at the jewelled dagger over the mantelpiece. Then she laughed, and shook her head.

"We will not go very far," said the man, "it would tire you."

In an instant he began to wax larger and larger. She could no longer see his head or limbs. His gown spread all over the hills and mountains, and at last she saw him no more, and she found herself sitting on a vast plain, under a tree, occupied with painting

her naked body with coloured clay.

A sudden peal of thunder overhead startled her, and falling upon her face, she prostrated herself in terror before the Thunder God, yelling in agony. The next moment she felt herself lifted by a naked man, who had a bundle of snakes in his hand.

"That'll make us a fine meal!" he cried; but she did not care for the tone of his voice, and wriggling herself free, she began to run without looking behind her.

* * *

She did not know how long she had been running, when all of a sudden she found herself in the arms of her father-husband, surrounded by twenty other women, wearing kilts made of rushes and feathers.

Her first act was to run inside the hut and prostrate herself before what looked like a green twig stuck in a clay-ball.

"O, high spirit," she said, "you who give us good pastures for our flocks, and shade, and plenty of kids; you have saved me from the arms of the snake-eating brute."

At that instant she felt cold fingers clasp her arm, and turning round, she saw the youth who was in charge of their flocks. He was quivering from head to foot.

"You are touching the Taboo! They will stick you to a tree!" cried the brown girl, whereupon he threw himself on to the ground and held her by the legs.

"I cannot let you go," he said.

"You have violated the Taboo," said a horrified voice behind them. There stood the old man with a solemn mien, cursing: "You coward!—not strong enough to capture yourself one from outside, you get hold of my women."

There was an uproar, and the youth was dragged out to be sacrificed to the Tree God, to ward off the curse.

The brown girl liked the boy, and she implored the Tree Spirit to save him.

But before she had risen again, she heard the noise outside, informing her that the boy was already despatched. In grief and anger, she kicked the image, and knowing the consequences of her act, she fled for her life.

As she approached a river bank, she saw a tiger from a thicket, coming towards her. She cried for help, and, with relief, she saw two men intercept the wild beast with their spears and kill it.

"Where are you going? These thickets are full of leopards that attack our villages at night," said the men to the brown girl. "You can accompany us, if your village is along the river-bank."

"I haven't got a village, nor any people," said the brown girl.

Meanwhile, two women, looking like brides, and carrying two small idols, joined them, and they, all together, proceeded along the river.

The brown girl spoke to the women, but they laid their fingers on their lips and would not reply. As

they slowed down, and the men were out of ear-shot, they said:

"One must not speak to people in the presence of one's husband."

The brown girl had fixed her eyes on their little idols:

"Are these your gods?" she enquired.

"Yes," they replied, "our family gods; we are taking them to our new homes, where we are going."

One of the idols was a disc of clay stuck on two sticks.

"This God is not a bit like the Tree Spirit," said the brown girl.

"This is the Moon God," said one of the women. "We cannot exist without him; he saves us from the wild animals and from snakes, and looks after our crops, and brings us rain."

A crowd came out of the village to receive them, headed by an old priest. They had come to meet the brides and lead them home.

The priest looked at the brown girl.

"Who are you?" he asked. "Do your people plough the land?"

"No, they used to drive the flocks," replied the brown girl.

"Oh, so you are a roamer," said the priest. "You must pass through fire before we can admit you to our village."

While the new brides were being made to walk round the fire, that being a nuptial rite, the brown girl, in terror, slipped away and hid herself in the

village temple. Here she found rows of gods, one of them slightly more elevated than the others.

"O gods! save me from the fire," she gasped, out of breath; but as no response came, she cried: "You have no kind word for a maid in distress! You have no tongues so far as I am concerned; but even if you had them, they could not prevail against the flaming tongue of the fire!" So saying, she rushed out of the temple.

A woman with a baby, who saw her darting out at this unusual hour, was startled, and yelled:

"A spirit!" and she ran for the nearest cow, kissed its tail, and touched the head of her baby with its tuft. "May the Mother Cow protect you from the shadow of the evil spirit," she cried.

* * *

The brown girl had left the village behind her. She wandered through cornfields and woods, till she found herself in a big homestead, amongst cows and dogs.

"Daughter, you have been out too long; it is not safe to roam so far in the fields," said a middle-aged man to her. "Even the gods are not safe from profane attacks in these times." He went on: "I hear that the king has already accepted the new gods of Zaradushtra. It will not take long now till all the people follow him; and those who do not will be compelled to leave the land."

"Who are the new gods, father?" asked the brown girl.

"One good spirit called Ahurmazd, who represents light, and another evil spirit called Ahirman, who represents darkness, and both are continually at war with each other," replied the Father.

"How does the good spirit look? Is he like any of our gods?" asked the brown girl.

"No," replied the father: "he is a man with a beärd, set in a winged wheel; and Zaradushtra says that all our gods are demons, and that his Ahurmazd and Ahirman are more ancient. Our "Homa" and "Agnie" have been spared, but have been subordinated to this Ahurmazd; and it is said that whosoever helps him to conquer the evil spirit, will, after death, go to Paradise; and that whosoever cultivates ancestral land, and keeps hearth-fires continuously burning, and honours the holy bull, and the dog, and the domestic bird, and despises the roaming life, he is the righteous man with whom Ahurmazd is well pleased."

"But we do all these things," said the brown girl. "We are landowners and ploughmen; we keep the hearth-fires ever alight, and protect cows and dogs; so what is the difference?"

"Can't you see, daughter, that our gods are dishonoured," said the father. "The sin of leaving the ancestral home and land and hearth-fires can only be forgiven when the exile is for the sake of the gods."

* * *

So they packed up, and with hosts of other emi-

grants, in carts drawn by bulls, they travelled to a land where the people were dark-skinned. They killed thousands of them before, led by great Manu, they could settle down on the banks of a new Saraswati.

"The gods have rewarded the people of the sacred plough," said the father to the brown girl. "They have once again found the holy Saraswati, whose banks they will plough, and raise the golden corn; the spirits of our ancestors guard us here as they did in Iran."

The brown girl looked at him and said:

"Father, this morning, when I had gone to bathe and fetch water, I was just worshipping the holy Saraswati and offering libations to the sun, when I saw one of those an-aryans worship a dead snake."

"Of course," remarked the father. "The great Manu says, that priests, warriors and traders should all be chosen from aryan-people; only the menial labour is assigned to the an-aryans, and they are strictly forbidden to worship the aryan Gods. This will guard us from confusion of castes."

Meanwhile the Brahmins arrived. It was time for sacrifices to the ancestors. The brown girl had to wash the feet of the Brahmins and feed them. She also had to feed the cows, and then wake the gods and give them food. From morning till evening she had to attend and perform rites in the house, the least deviation from which meant a heavy curse.

"We have many more sacrifices and rites here than in Iran," she said to her father.

"Yes, daughter," he replied, "but your remark just

reminds me, that you are growing old; and our sacred law says that house in which a daughter is allowed to mature into womanhood, before being given away in wedlock, is cursed by the gods. You must be married, and may you become the mother of many sons. Cursed is the man who dies without a son; he will never go to heaven, because there will be none to offer food to his spirit and to feed the Brahmins. Likewise, a barren woman, too, is cursed by the gods and a widow is happier when she accompanies her dead husband on the funeral pyre, than live after him."

When the brown girl presented food to the image of the family God, she prostrated herself, and offered a special prayer to win a husband.

Very soon her prayer was granted, and she was married.

But it was not long before her husband was bitten by a snake, and lay dying.

The priest insisted that he should be laid on the ground and washed, because if he died on his bed he would never see heaven.

The brown girl knew the fate of a widow. Flee she must, but she dare not cross the seas, the black waters, or she was an accursed outcast. So she fled inland.

* * *

After a terrible long flight, at the breaking of dawn she arrived at a forest glade, surrounded by high towering bunyan trees that were like so many aisles.

Utterly exhausted, she threw herself on the green grass and burst into tears.

Her sobbing woke up thousands of parrots and Mynas that roosted in the trees, and in an instant the soundless forest was ringing with song of birds. This, and the golden horizon peeping through the branches heralding the sunrise, sufficiently raised her spirits to go and wash herself in the wood-lake near by.

Hardly had she finished her bath, when the sound of a far-off flute reached her ear. She listened breathlessly, and walked in the direction whence the sweet music proceeded. The closer she came, the clearer and lovelier sounded the flute. From all sides now she saw young and beautiful damsels advancing with flower-garlands towards the flute player. They all moved as though enchanted. The very air had ceased to breathe; everything seemed suspended, listening to the flute.

No sooner had the wonderful melodious outpour ceased, than a cry arose: "The Cowherd boy!" and all the damsels rushed towards the flute-player, and so did the brown girl, instinctively.

Then she stood in front of a dark youth of magical beauty, and, as did others, so did she fall upon her knees, and they formed a circle round the youth. He greeted every one with a smile; but he repeated his gaze at the brown girl, making sure that he was seeing her for the first time. To reward them for their love and adoration, he played another entrancing tune.

Just as he had finished, he threw away his instrument and danced a graceful roundalay with the

damsels. Hardly was the dance finished, when he cried:

"Now, every one, off to your work, or else your fathers will curse me. We'll meet again at noon-tide."

They obeyed, hesitatingly, and while going home, kept on looking behind, till they could see him no longer. The brown girl, naturally, remained where she was.

"Who are you?" asked the youth.

"I arrived here only this morning, and was thrilled by your flute," replied the brown girl. "How different one feels in this free forest, with no rites to perform. I would love to wash your feet a thousand times with my eyelashes; but I am glad not to have to wash the Brahmin's feet for a day. I have seen the beautiful image of Brahma, with four arms and four heads; and the great Shiva, and even the glorious Vishnu, and all their lovely consorts, but now I have got a living god before me."

The youth was somewhat startled at her last words.

"Oh, I am only a cowherd," he said. "We do nothing the whole day but swim, sing and dance; I hope now you, too, will join us."

He then untied a parcel he had with himself, and offered her a portion of the bread and sweets he had brought from home for his breakfast.

"This is an enchanted world where I have landed," said the brown girl. "I never dreamt of this before."

Bathing, playing, dancing and singing; this round went on for a long time, and the brown girl and the gopies doted on this beautiful boy as on some idol;

until, one day, he suddenly disappeared from their midst.

The brown girl sat with the other damsels, weeping, mourning his absence. Till, one day a forest-dweller, with long white hair, appeared and informed them that their cowherd boy was really a prince, and had to lead in the great wars that were being fought in the country, and after conquering and destroying the Rakashas (the wild tribes), had married beautiful queens, and had got hundreds of sons who all looked like gods. He also said that even the Brahmins bent their knees before him as their leader.

"Will he never come this side again?" asked the brown girl.

"No, never," replied the hermit. "To this place belonged his boyhood; his manhood belongs to somewhere else."

The brown girl had felt that an entirely new page had opened in her life, and for this sudden irrevocable loss she was inconsolable.

"But then," she said to herself, "I have got him still, for no one can deprive me of the memory of those beautiful days that I treasure within myself. His image is too within my heart. The morning sun, the trees, the lake, the wind, the clouds—all these gods that I used to worship before, I still adore, but how differently. I love them now; whereas before I was only constrained to bend my knees to them. Added to these, the birds, the flowers, the dances, and his divine music that he loved, I have learnt to love them all through him. I feel different, and look upon the world with different eyes. Yes, I will not rest till I

find him again. I'll walk and walk behind him till my legs can carry me no further. Now it dawns on me," she went on musing:

"How foolish these Aryan people were when they left their original home and discarded Zaradushtra's gods, the Maker and the Destroyer. Because after coming here they adopted all the same, those two, and even added a third, Great Vishnu, the Preserver God."

So thinking, she started to walk in search of her god.

* * *

She wandered through mountain, wood and plain, till arriving at a strange, unknown place, she was captured by two bearded, quaint-looking men with plaited hair, who carried her off to their camels and sold her, at last, as a slave to the Pharoah. She became his most favourite servant, whom he loved to keep in constant attendance and talk to, because she could understand him.

While passing through this town, which was entirely built of mud houses, she saw a stately building of solid stone in its midst.

"Who dwells in there?" she enquired from a passer-by.

"The Saviour God of the City," was the reply.

All agog, she hurried thither, but the priest who stood at the gate with a rod in his hand, forbade her to enter. This increased her curiosity all the more,

and walking around the house, she discovered a chink in the wall through which she could peer into a dark chamber, and also saw what appeared to be a most luxuriously kept, enormous crocodile.

She laughed.

She saw no purpose in making a secret of this one, when hundreds of his brothers lay along the banks of the Nile constantly exposed to the view of anyone who cared to look at them. Suddenly she got thoughtful, and seemed to remember the scene on the banks of Saraswati, where she had seen an Anaryan worshipping a snake. But no one there had ever put an animal into a temple.

Proceeding in her walk, she came to what looked like a big mount, wherein a dead man was being interred. What really startled her was, that not only his furniture and house-hold things, but living animals and women were being herded in to be buried with the dead body.

Remembering the night when she was in danger of being burnt alive on the funeral pyre, she felt horror-struck, and in one breath she ran back to the palace. Throwing herself at the feet of her master, she enquired what this meant.

"So this strikes you as improper. It has appeared to me likewise since my childhood," said her master, and smiled. "We seem to be of a kindred spirit. So far the priests have obstructed my way to reform these cruel customs, but now no more shall I tolerate their opposition. I shall establish the worship of the true God."

"Honoured master," said the brown girl, "I am myself in search of the real God."

"Come, I will show him to you," said the Pharoah, and taking her upon an open terrace, he pointed with ecstasy to the sun, and said: "Aren't men mad? Is it not plain that he is the author of the earth and of all life on it, and of us too? The glorious Aton! Can they worship any other god in the presence of him?"

His ecstatic mood and his graceful manner reminded the brown girl of the flute prince, who, too, had become a king and ruled so many towns and villages, and before whom even the Brahmins had bent their knees. She was not surprised to find that here, too, a king was leading men to God.

"I remember to have poured libations to this beautiful God," she said. "But wasn't there also Varuna, the refulgent Sky God, who wears the starry dress? Is he not the father of this God?"

"I, too, have felt some being higher than Aton," said the Pharoah. "But for me this glorious God is quite enough. He has honoured me to be his high priest and son."

In spite of all the assurances of the Pharoah, the funeral scene never left the mind of the brown girl. She had fled from the live-burning, and now the live-burial threatened her. She continuously contemplated flight, and the Pharoah's absence, when he was building a new city for himself, gave her the desired opportunity to make good her escape.

* * *

After managing to get out of the city gate, she wended her way to the misty hills in the distance, till she met a large multitude of people, led by a tall, long bearded, square-shouldered, venerable man, who carried a long staff in his hand.

"Would to God we had remained in Egypt, where we sat by the flesh-pots, and where we could eat our fill!" cried some of the people.

"Cowards and ungrateful men," said their leader, wrathfully, "this is the way you thank the God of Israel, who has delivered you from the slavery of the Pharoahs, where your every male child was to be killed. Are you, then, nothing but stomachs? Man eats, to live a decent and useful life. But if he is condemned to live like a grovelling pig and a slave, need he then live at all? And when 'life' itself becomes a degradation, where does the eating or not eating, come in? You would sell your birth-right for pottage, eh? Shame on you! Just behold! there your God appears in the cloud; he is the best of all gods!"

The brown girl intently looked into the cloud. She remembered the Cloud God, but the God in the cloud she could not quite comprehend.

As soon as bread and meal had been promised to the grumblers, and they had settled down at the foot of a mountain, she ventured to speak to the leader:

"You spoke of the God in the cloud," she said. "I could not see him; could you show him to me?"

"Look there!" cried the leader again, pointing to the top of the mountain. "He has descended on

the mount of Sinai in fire and smoke! Do you not see the mountain quaking?"

Once again the brown girl, all eyes, looked at the mountain peak. The Fire God was clearly in her mind; but God in the fire again confounded her.

"Still I cannot see him. Oh, how I long to see him," she said.

"Woman," cried the leader, angrily, "you are crazy. Don't you hear the clear voice saying that you cannot see him or else you will perish? Don't you hear the voice saying that, except me and my brother Aaron, not even priests are allowed to approach the mountain top?"

Presently, he gave orders that an altar should be built, and a ram to be killed as a sacrifice to the Lord. The ram's blood was to be thrown on the altar and sprinkled on the people, and the tip of his brother's right ear was to be painted with it. Some part of the flesh was being burnt, so that the smoke should reach the God.

The brown girl dimly remembered the same sacrifices, even of human beings, and then of horses and other animals, so this did not surprise her.

After some time she heard interminable instructions being given about the building of a tabernacle. Detailed instructions about the altar of gold, curtains of linen, blue, purple and scarlet; their measurements, brass and gold rings, sockets of silver, candlesticks, bars of chittin-wood and ashpans; the oil and spices with which the tabernacle was to be anointed; the garments of the leader's brother, his girdle, his breast-

plate, embroidered robes and mitres, and the ceremonies that were to be performed at the altar, such as blood offerings and burnt offerings.

These rites and ceremonies woke up in her subconscious impressions of the rites she used to perform herself. It pleased her, however, when the leader strictly prohibited the making of images of stone or metal; for since she had seen her living God, such were absolutely dead objects to her. She also felt relieved that he made no mention of ancestral spirits and their feeding. She admired the wonderful Ten Commandments, and the wise laws he gave to his followers. On the whole, she was much impressed and inspired by the personality and the zeal of this venerable leader.

It was just when he had gone up to the mountain that one married man asked her to marry him; because, he said, no woman should walk about without a guardian.

"I have already been married, and I have no mind to marry again," said the brown girl.

"Have you children?" asked the man.

"No," replied the brown girl.

"So you are barren," he said. "If I inform the people of that, you will be an outcast."

At that moment a noise arose. Fit men were called out to cross the Jordan as the leader had desired. The man was compelled to attend to the call, and she was glad for the God-sent opportunity to slip away.

* * *

Once again tears ran from her eyes, and it was strange that, through the silver mist of her tears, she seemed to see a palace in the distance, and without any conscious effort on her part she felt herself moving towards it, till at last she entered the vineyard adjoining the palace. Suddenly her eye fell on a beautiful prince, walking in the vineyard. His complexion reminded her of the flute prince, and for a moment she mistook him to be the same, for he, too, had a musical instrument which he was playing, and he was reciting these verses:

"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine."

"I am black, but comely, oh ye daughters of Jerusalem! Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me."

He seemed to understand the birds and beasts, and he seemed to rejoice in all Nature around him.

As if in a trance, she entered with him in his palace, which was built of hewed stone and cedar wood, with brass pillars. She found a veritable city of splendour inside it, and hundreds of his lovely queens and slave-girls. She, too, saw there the tabernacle she had seen before, and on the other side she beheld throngs of wonderful horses, chariots and warriors. She did not know whether the whole thing was real, or only her imagination, because the prince was a perfect replica of the cowherd boy. Perhaps he really was the same—her prince; her idol; her god—now in this palace, amongst his queens and horses and warriors, as had been described to her by the hoary forest-dweller.

With a cry of ecstasy, she ran towards him to ask him if he did recognise his gopie. But in this moment, the tear that had lingered on her eyelash, rolled down her cheek, and the whole scene had disappeared like a mirage.

"Have I gone mad?" she said to herself. "Since I have left my flute prince, I seem to see nothing but his images everywhere. The priests and their whole tribe I have left behind, and wherever I go, or roam in thought, a beautiful and wise prince is leading his people, and is the object of adoration to the priests themselves. My feet are ever wanting to walk to the Bindraban forest, where I first heard his flute."

* * *

So saying, she resumed her wanderings.

A well-known, fresh scent, wafted by the breeze, told her that she was not far from the place of her objective. As she entered the woods, a painful sight presented itself to her. Scores of men were doing most tortuous penances, unmindful of the whole world around them.

She ran to help a man, who was hanging upside down, his feet bound to a branch of a tree. At her approach, the man furiously asked her to mind her own business, and not to interfere with that of others.

This made her quicken her pace to get out of the wood. It was not long before she arrived at the outskirts of a small village, and found a most impressive figure, although in the garb of a beggar, squatting

under a large peepal tree. Finding the shade agreeable, and being very tired, she advanced to sit down at a short distance from him.

"Please spare the worm," he said, anxiously, yet gently.

She stepped aside in compliance, and saw an earthworm near her feet.

"Are you fond of worms?" she asked.

"They are no better and no worse than we ourselves," he replied, and the brown girl rejoined—

"I have learnt to love birds, the trees and the flowers, but I don't care for worms."

Upon this he smiled gently, and said:

"I see, you are already on the way; it requires only a little further stretch of love to get the worm within its circle."

"I am sure I have never come across a man like you before," said the brown girl. "I was just in search of a beautiful, divine prince in these woods, where I met him first. He did not teach me to love anything. He just loved, and I, too, had to love. But then I do remember that at that time, and a little before, people used to sacrifice their children at the altar of their gods, and scores of animals, too. Do you prohibit these sacrifices to the gods?"

"Gods need no sacrifices," he replied. "Besides, gods themselves are helpless, and must go through this wheel of life as man himself. Have your found happiness in your life?"

"I can't say so much for myself, but I have seen princes who appeared very happy," replied the

brown girl.

He again smiled gently.

"I, too, have been a prince at one time," he said. "I had a paradisial palace to live in, and a most beautiful princess to love. And yet I found that from birth onward man is attended by pain. The more a man clings to this life, and what it brings, the more unhappy he becomes. I left everything to find a solution for the misery of the world and the unhappiness that pervades all around. I am glad to say that my renunciation has borne fruit, and that now I can call myself the Pathfinder."

"Had you also to do all the penances to find the path?" asked the brown girl.

"Oh, no," he replied, "I did the penances, but I found no profit in them."

"If you have found the path to God, then please show it to me," said the brown girl.

"I have found the path to Nirvana," he said. "That bliss without a shadow. Man must prepare his own mind so that it ceases to long for anything. It is a difficult path to walk. It is almost like scaling a very steep mountain; my true follower is one who has no house, no wife, who never cooks his food, who lives on what he gets in his alms-bowl, and who renounces what the people call the life of the world. So long, one desire rankles in the mind of man, it once again engenders life, which is the source of sorrow. The world has become used to walk the An-aryan path of craving; of the lust of the flesh; the lust of life, and the lust of the present world.

But I offer to them the eightfold Aryan path."

The last words startled the brown girl. "Master," she said, "I do remember the Aryan way. It was to adopt a settled life, and never to roam; to own and cultivate land; never to leave the hearth, and keep its fires ever alight, and sacrifice to the gods and to the spirits of ancestors. To possess sons, without which no man can get to heaven. It was Possession, and not Renunciation. But your teaching appears to me to be exactly the contrary; and yet you call it the Aryan path?"

"It was an illusion to call that other the Aryan path," he said. "It is through possessions, relationships, rites and external performance which man has created, that he finds unhappiness in the world multiplied hundredfold. He will have to sever those connections, which continuously drag him to earth and settle him on it. He will have to get rid of all desires for the life of this world and for the life of what he calls heaven. Man has no ancestors but desire. Man has no home but desire. Man has no children but children of desire. Man will have to get rid of all that, before he can ever see happiness at all."

"But what is happiness?" asked the brown girl.

"To put an end to re-birth and renewal of life, and the misery that ever attends upon it," he replied.

The brown girl was confounded. She thought the only little happiness that she had found in this life of ups and downs, was to seek her god-like prince. But for that search she would have found life unbearable, and she could not understand how the

longing and the desiring could be a source of unhappiness. Yet, she could not but think that this new prince in beggar-garb, was gentle, beautiful and wise beyond description, and she could not bring herself to believe that what he was saying could ever be an untruth, and this made her difficulties all the more insoluble.

Kissing his hands, and asking for his blessing, which was given as soon as asked, she took leave of him and wended her way to the village.

As she entered the village temple, she saw an image of what was supposed to be a god, dark blue in colour, and with a flute in his hand. The complexion and the flute reminded her of the prince she was in search of. She was certain that she had not seen this image in any temple before.

She bowed to the priest, and asked for the name of that god.

"This is Krishna (the dark one), the eighth incarnation of the great Vishnu; the Lord of the Gopies," replied the priest.

The brown girl was beyond herself with joy. After all, the prince she had met had been a god.

"Where can I find him?" she asked the priest. "I thought he was dead."

"Stop your profanities," said the priest. "You could never have seen the god, nor can a god die."

"Pray, tell me where I can find him," repeated the brown girl anxiously, whereupon the priest cried angrily:

"Don't you see the great one in your front? Yet

you ask where you can find him! You seem to be out of your mind! No wonder," he continued, furiously, "the times are out of joint! As was predicted by the great ancients, the Demon has actually arisen to destroy the gods and preach unheard-of beliefs; and the demon is being called even Budh, the Path-finder!"

He had talked himself into a frenzy, and his attitude became so very threatening, that the brown girl quickly left the temple.

"So they don't think that a god can be born and die," she said to herself. "They have represented all their gods in human forms, and yet they don't seem to like the idea that a beautiful human being should be the god. Was it, then, all an illusion of my own mind, that, after the water, the fire, and the clouds, I thought that perhaps the real god was the human being himself? But the priest said gods are never born, and never die. How ugly and soulless looks that stone whom they call god, in comparison to my living prince, who was actually born, and who died." Here she suddenly broke off, remembering the words of the great Pathfinder about scaling the mountain.

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In disgust, she left the valleys behind, and started climbing. After a long and tortuous journey, she arrived at a grove that abounded with blossoming cherry trees. A number of men wearing long gowns and pigtails were seated on mats, sipping a hot beverage from daintily painted cups, served by a

woman with tiny feet.

The brown girl sat down in a corner and listened to what was being talked. An elderly man, who seemed to be much respected by everyone, said:

"The only thing I must tell you about is 'The Way'. Human beings waste themselves with external activities of all sort. 'The Way' requires doing nothing. 'The Way' also demands that you should return good for evil."

"My honoured friend Lao-tze," said a slightly younger man, "to return good for evil? Evil must be punished. Justice, my honoured friend, justice. Besides, to do nothing? Why, you must help your neighbour and yourself. Only what you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others."

"This is right, my honoured master Confucius", said another man. "But should we not serve the spirits of our ancestors as did all those who lived before us?"

"My good man," replied Confucius, "when we cannot serve ourselves, how can we serve the spirits?"

Several others took part in the discussion, which lasted till agreeing to disagree, the party broke up.

The brown girl was moved by the words "The Way," which had been uttered by the speaker called Lao-tze, as it carried her thoughts back to the saintly Pathfinder, and suddenly a vision presented itself before her eyes. She saw the whole country flooded with the sculptured statues of the Pathfinder, and he being worshipped as god himself. The vision passed off as swiftly as it had come. She smiled.

"My imagination seems to work," she said to herself. "I have seen one prince being worshipped as a god, and the suggestion has created this vision."

She was woken from her thoughts by the pitiable cries of a young girl, who was being sold by her father to a rough-looking, elderly man, and who was opposing the bargain with all her might.

The brown girl remembered in a lightning flash all the horrors that she had experienced when she had been a slave in the Pharoah's land, and had seen the slave-women being buried alive. Alarm had sounded once again. Yet she dared not re-cross the mountains, and so she once more took to the road and wandered towards the West.

* * *

It didn't seem very long before she arrived in a well-built city of fair people in the midst of a festival.

"In whose honour is this feast?" she asked a passer-by.

"In honour of Dionysius, the giver of the grape and the god of wine," was the reply.

That reminded her at once of Homa and Soma and the drink rites which she knew so well.

"Which are the other gods worshipped here in this place?" she asked.

"Demeter, the goddess of earth fertility; also Apollo and Athene," replied the man.

"But who are you?" he continued, with a suspicious glance at her. "Are you a barbarian or a

slave?—because no decent woman of your age may walk in the streets." Then, as if suddenly remembering the feast, he went on: "Not even on a festival day; at least, not without attendance. And if you are a barbarian, who is your patron?"

At this moment a grotesque-looking, short man arrived on the scene, and the speaker bowed.

"Hail, Socrates!" he said; and the man thus addressed saluted in turn, and then said, with a smile:

"Well, friend, have you found anyone not quite filled with the god? Is there anyone left with whom one can speak sense?"

"I have at least found one," replied the other, pointing at the brown girl; "but a very doubtful one."

"Are you a newcomer to this city?" asked Socrates, turning to her.

"Yes, master," she replied.

"Who are your gods?" he asked further.

"To tell you the truth, I am in search of God," replied the brown girl. "I have worshipped many, but I have been growing more and more doubtful whether I have found any true god at all."

Socrates roared with laughter.

"I am afraid many of us here, too, are becoming sceptical," he said. "The gods that behave worse than men would not be of much use to men. When they can't help themselves, how can they help others? But I know," he added, "the gods do not err; it is the poets that create those lies. The chief thing is to acquire wisdom, because virtue itself is wisdom. Argue with yourself, and argue with others; we can

only arrive at the truth by argument. But, pray, don't pay for learning them, because there are plenty here to rob you of your money and teach you false arguments."

"Is this wine god the greatest god in this city?" asked the brown girl, who had not exactly followed his talk on arguments.

"Yes, specially in the winter months. He is the greatest god of Delphi," he replied, and continued: "Wine is useful in cold weather. Today, people don't think of Zeus even as much as of Demeter, the goddess of corn; the stomach comes first in Athens, as much as anywhere else."

"Do you believe in these gods?" asked the brown girl.

"O yes, certainly," was the reply. "I pray to them, and sacrifice to them; but I must confess that a 'Voice' tells me that there is something higher than these, which must be aboriginal."

"Hail, Master! I have been searching you every where!" cried now a younger man from behind them.

Socrates turned round, and with undisguised joy he replied:

"Welcome! son of Ariston; how is your Republic thriving? Has perfection already been accomplished?"

"So far," replied the other. "Anyway, I have no place for poets in my republic; because they are corrupters of men, and once a man's soul is corrupted, it can only reappear either in a beast or in a woman. The only class that cannot be dispensed with is the slave class. The most important class, naturally,

is that of the soldiers; the only class worth educating, and indeed should be carefully educated; more so, since Aristotle, my pupil, says that the northern people are barbarians, and their only occupation is fighting. He also agrees with me, that traders, artisans and labourers can never become virtuous. I have, however, come to the conclusion that the real world that matters is the world of 'idea,' and not the material world. The world of 'ideas' must have existed before the world of 'objects'. Ideas are like patterns after which the objects are made."

"Pardon me," said the brown girl, suddenly quite alert, "I think you will have to prove your statement by arguments. I wonder if you can ever get an idea of anything before you actually see something. I have all my life seen things, and the first words that I have uttered were, 'Oh, I had no idea of this before.' So you must excuse me if what you just now said appears topsy-turvy to me."

"I think the damsel is quite right, son of Ariston," said Socrates. "You haven't advanced any cogent arguments to prove your statement; but I am afraid you are yourself a bit of a poet." And turning to the brown girl, he continued: "Have you any further arguments in support of your opinion?"

"I am not an expert at argumentation," she replied. "But my personal experience is all against such a proposition. As a child, I saw only objects as they are, and had no ideas about them. I had to see each object more than once before I could conclude that it was the same object seen at different times, and then

alone the idea of the object arose in my mind. But then I am only talking of my personal experience."

"I am afraid she is right," said Socrates to the other. "Your arguments are not yet so convincing. As far as our actual experience is concerned, impressions precede ideas."

"I confess that my arguments are not yet convincing to the outsider," said the son of Ariston. "But none the less, personally I am fully convinced. But, Master, I sought you because I wanted to take you to the Delphi, and I think we should be going."

Socrates apologised to the brown girl for not sending her to his own house and Xanthippe; but he directed her to Aspasia's house, where, he said, she would receive every attention, and where he would be glad to see her again.

On her way to Aspasia's house she passed by a temple, where a crowd of people had collected, and, being curious to see a temple in this country, she proceeded towards it. As she entered she saw a small girl being sacrificed at the altar. She rushed to snatch the victim away, when the priest held her back and cried:

"Mad woman! How dare you profane the sacrifice of the God!"

"Oh, but she is too young to die," pleaded the brown girl.

"Will it be better to throw the girl outside the town to die of hunger and cold, as is the fate of so many hundreds, to keep the population within normal limits; or is it better to sacrifice her to the gods?"

said the priest, sternly.

When the brown girl heard that in this country children were exposed to death by their parents, and that this course of conduct was being advocated by the most learned of the land, she felt horror-struck.

She was, however, surprised at her own feelings, and she asked herself: "Why am I so horrified at this? Do I not remember to have seen human sacrifices before?"

In an instant the incident of the Pathfinder and the worm came to her mind, and she sighed: "How have I changed since then!"

Suddenly, a soldier caught her by the wrist.

"Who are you?" he shouted. "Who is your patron? How dare you come here and profane the sacrifice of the god?"

He dragged her out of the temple, and brought her before a tribunal.

"Your fit punishment is to be flogged and crucified," said the court. "But as you are an absolute newcomer, and ignorant of the laws of this city, the jury recommends you for mercy, and you are sentenced to be branded and sold as a slave."

Thereupon she was branded with a hot iron on her left shoulder, and auctioned in the market-place. A Roman Patrician who happened to be there, purchased her.

"Girl, you will not find Rome as beautiful as this city," he said to her. "We haven't got such lovely gods. No one can make such beautiful statues there; but we are just building a temple to these gods, and will

introduce them there."

The very idea frightened her, because she never could separate these beautiful-looking gods from human sacrifices.

At once her purchaser changed his attitude, and said:

"I must tell you, however, that, docile as you find me, if you dare to look so inattentive in the presence of my father, he will kill you."

The brown girl, to her grief, realised the truth of these words when they reached Rome. Although her special duty was to serve the wife of the man who had bought her, her mistress herself was almost a slave to her husband's father, the head of the household, the ruler and the high priest. He could even kill any of them with impunity.

A fig tree and an oak in the house-yard were constant objects of worship to the household. The door of the house was worshipped by the men with much solemnity and ritual; likewise, the blazing hearth, by the women.

This was enough to bring the remotest past back to the brown girl's mind; while the strictness of the ritual that accompanied every ordinary act of life, did remind her of those tiring days when she used to wash the feet of the Brahmans. She could not appease herself that a people, who in many respects appeared well-to-do and sensible, should still be worshipping, not only the tree and hearth, but the two-faced house-door god, with all solemnity. She laughed till her sides ached when she thought of it. Greece was enough to make one a Sceptic, she

thought, but in Rome one could not help but become a Cynic.

It was some time before she could see the State Temple. This, she learnt from her mistress, was dedicated to the god-father, the sky god, who was represented by a spear; and to the god Terminus, the boundary-stone god, who was there in form of a stone.

"Can't I accompany you to the temple and see the gods?" she asked her mistress, concealing with difficulty her amusement.

"You foolish girl," replied her mistress, alarmed. "Nobody dares to approach the gods except the Patricians. You are a slave, but not even the plebians dare have recourse to them. In all matters the gods have to be consulted, and the patricians alone can consult them."

"Are there, then, no public sacrifices?" asked the brown girl again.

"Oh yes," replied her mistress. "Lately there was a human sacrifice in the Forum to the Greek deities, at the direction of the Sibylline book."

The brown girl was disgusted, and could ask no more. The very name "God" now began to stink in her nostrils. She felt, although an age had passed before she saw that a temple was being built in honour of the great Caesar, who had been deified, and henceforward the emperors were themselves to be worshipped.

"Still more gods," said the brown girl to herself. "But this one did not take long to become one; only yesterday he was being abused as a tyrant. It seems

a quicker process has come into operation."

In these surroundings she found life intolerable and degrading, and her only wish was to get away. The opportunity was not long in coming.

At one of the usual spring festivals, where everyone in the house was practically drunk, her mistress, in a fit of generosity, threw one of her robes to her, and also bestowed on her some of her ornaments. The brown girl found the occasion very welcome. In an hour she was dressed, and had left the house of the patrician behind.

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The memories of her past wanderings sustained her during this difficult journey, till she arrived on a small hill, where she saw a crowd of people sitting in a circle. A lad was holding a tray, whereupon lay a few loaves and fishes. A man who stood near, and whom they called "the Nazarene," extended his arm over the tray, and at once the loaves and fishes multiplied to such an extent that all the people present were fed, and yet so many basketfuls were left over.

After they had eaten, a blind man was presented to the Nazarene, who touched his eyes; whereupon he could see instantly. Then a woman came and took him to a grave, and uncovered it. He called the dead man by his name, and he rose and walked out in his winding sheet.

The brown girl was astonished at the sight of these unusual happenings. She thought this man would

certainly be able to tell her about the things that had so far puzzled her; so she respectfully approached him, and said:

"Master, you have performed wonders."

"Have I," he laughed. "These perverse, childish people are attracted only by unusual happenings and novelties, and more than that, by greed for loaves and fishes, and for the life of flesh. Now you will see, that although I have slipped them, they will run after me, not for anything else but for more loaves and fishes." "Alas," he continued, with a sad mien, "hundreds of times I repeat to them that their ancestors ate this bread, and they are all dead; that life of flesh meant death eternal; that I wanted to give them bread of life and life eternal; but none of them would want that."

"Should one not seek to find food and raiment, and work for it?" asked the brown girl.

"Take no thought for what you shall eat, and what you shall drink," he replied. "Behold the fowls of the air: they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet they are fed. And why take you thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin, and yet, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Seek you first the Kingdom of God."

"But, Master, where is the Kindgom of God?" asked the brown girl.

"The Kingdom of God is within you," he replied. "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto it, and very few will find it."

The idea of not working for one's living, and of

the difficult way, and the importance attached to the life of the mind, and disregard to the external things, and the world, together with the man's gentleness, reminded her of the Pathfinder.

At this moment a man came up to them, and desired to follow the Nazarene; but he asked him whether he could first bury his dead father.

"Let the dead bury their dead," said the Nazarene. "If any cometh to me, and hateth not his father and his mother and his wife and his children, and his brethren and his sisters and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Can't you see, man, that even the foxes have their lairs, but that I keep no house?"

The brown girl was not very surprised at these words, although she found them rather strong. She had already heard the Pathfinder say that the householder's life was not congenial to finding Nirvana. That man should live on what he received in his alms-bowl; and that he must renounce his family, his relations, his home and all his possessions. Had not the Pathfinder prince done the same thing himself? In fact, the words of the Nazarene made her respect this gentle, saintly man all the more, and she seriously began to search the truth of his sayings; although it was very hard to understand what he really meant.

But what a contrast it was to the life and the kind of people that she had just left behind.

She actually felt refreshed. Once more she began to recover faith that perhaps, after all, some true god was there and must be sought. Her interest in the

Nazarene grew enormously, and she resolved to learn more from him. So she accompanied him to an inn, where he, with several other men, sat down to take meals.

An Israelite came and rebuked them, saying that it was against the law of Moses to eat with unwashed hands.

"Unwashed hands do not defile: it is the unwashed mind that defiles a man," said the Nazarene.

The Israelite was irritated, and asked him if he was a king to give a new law.

"My Kingdom is not of this world," he replied. "Likewise, you should seek heaven and have nothing to do with this world."

He then called twelve persons, and told them to go and preach about the Kingdom of Heaven to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The brown girl remembered the people of Israel, and the days when the tabernacle was being built, and all the great care that had been used to build it. The remembrance of that strict ritual again reminded her of the days in the far past when she used to wash the feet of the Brahmans. In her heart she was drawn to this Nazarene, as she had been drawn to the Pathfinder, because they both discarded the necessity of external form and ritual.

Once again she approached the Nazarene, and asked:

"Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

The Nazarene sharply turned to her, and said:

"Pray do not call me good. None is good save God." Then he added: "To inherit the Kingdom of Heaven you must leave everything behind and have no possessions whatsoever. You must not resist evil, and you must make yourself humble before everybody, and you must not judge anyone."

"But, master," said the brown girl, surprised, "what should the rulers do?"

"I am not concerned with the rule of this world and its rulers," he replied.

"Should we do the bidding of the king?" she asked.

"Yes, render unto the king what belongs to the king," he replied.

"You have told me not to do so many things," said the brown girl, "but what shall I actually do to find Heaven?"

"Love God and love your neighbour as yourself," replied the Nazarene.

"How can I love a thing that I have never seen?" said the brown girl. "I am just seeking God to see whether I am at all able to love him."

"Watch and pray," he said gently. "Be like those careful virgins who kept the lamps burning, so that when the bridegroom came, he took them all inside as his brides, and those who had slept were left outside."

"How shall I pray?" she asked.

"Shut yourself in a closet," he replied, "and say: 'Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven; give us this day our daily bread, and for-

give us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil'."

The brown girl listened attentively. Once again she was puzzled. The words "Give us our daily bread" from the lips of him who continuously was saying that we should not give any thought to food and raiment, seemed strange. Nor could she quite understand the meaning of the words, "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." How could we, she thought, be an example to God? Besides, the idea of give and take did not appeal to her.

The horrible occurrences that followed, and the loss of her loved teacher, pained her immensely. Again and again she ruminated over all what she had learnt this time, and more and more she realised that but for minor differences, such as seeking the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Kingdom of God, when the Pathfinder had talked about Nirvana, the method of these two great men agreed almost in all details. This life was to be discarded. This world was to be eschewed. Possessions, family-relationships, hearth and home, was all to be left behind; and any thought of earning one's living, and the thought of marrying, were repugnant to them both, as they did show in their personal conduct.

Two great men of this type, she thought, when they agree with each other in almost every detail of their teaching, they could not both be wrong. The only thing to do was to put their teachings into practice.

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At this moment a vision came before her eyes. She saw the whole East covered with followers of the Pathfinder calling themselves Bhikshus (Beggars), the most honourable name that the Pathfinder himself had contrived for them, and she saw the whole West covered with monastries and mendicant friars, the most honourable religious orders of the day. This vision of the future all the more strengthened her resolution to take to a secluded life away from the world and its doings, where the Kingdom of Heaven could be exclusively sought, and she prepared herself to take the three required vows for initiation, namely, that of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

After all the wanderings, this self-imposed imprisonment, where she had no recourse to the outside world at all, was very interesting to her. It provided her an opportunity for thinking over all she had gone through, and at the same time examining the motions and emotions of her own inner mind. Side by side, the disciplinary prayers and formalities that she had to perform at the command of the matron, though naturally unpleasant to her, were still borne by her with all cheerfulness under her vow of obedience. The worship of the Cross she could understand as a preparation to be able to suffer without complaint; but the worship of the Nazarene as a God, confounded her, because she remembered his words: "Why callest thou me good? None but God is good." This Nazarene worship, however, reminded her of her vision, in which she had seen the Pathfinder being worshipped as a god; a man who had strictly prohibited

the worship of any god at all. It also reminded her of the flute prince and of all the other god-formations she had witnessed in her wanderings.

What she found most irksome was that the slightest regard towards cleanliness of her body was looked upon with suspicion, and was strictly prohibited—so much so, that ordinary washing went entirely out of use and custom. At last, she resolved to be cleared on that point, and she asked the matron:

"Is it a sin to bathe?"

"Yes", was the stern reply. "Any regard for the body is a sin. Don't you remember the saying of our Lord, that eating with unwashed hands does not defile?"

The brown girl was not satisfied with this reply; but her own vow of obedience made her silent.

In course of time, all her doings turned into a routine, which she went through more or less like a machine. This made her listless and melancholic, and the need of freedom, motion, action and interest in life asserted themselves, and she longed to be out of this prison.

It was soon after that a fire broke out in the nunnery, and everyone had to run for life; although some of the nuns would rather be burnt alive than leave their places. But the brown girl, who already had lived out this self-imposed restraint, was glad to be out, and before anyone could take notice of her, she was gone.

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She was surprised to find the world quite different to what she had left. The new prayer houses were thronged with idols. Everywhere she saw images of the mother of the Nazarene, who was being worshipped as a goddess, and a father-god and a son-god reminded her of all the past gods she had known.

Greatly as she rejoiced over her freedom, it was not going to be of long duration. She happened to speak to a man about religion, and remarked that retirement to monastries and nunneries, and the routine it entailed, was tiring. This being reported to the Bishop, she was arrested and charged with tempting young men and corrupting their beliefs. As she also looked a bit outlandish, she was accused of witchcraft, and ordered to be burnt alive. A young scribe, however, had lost his heart to her intelligent and bewitching eyes, and it was through his clandestine assistance that she once again found herself free and on the way to a far-off desert land, to avoid to be seen once again in the same place.

Her arrival in the very first village proved a death-knell to her freedom. She was captured by the head of the village as his prize, and brought to his house, where he counted his dead father's wives amongst his own consorts.

On the day of her arrival a daughter was born in the family, which was at once ordered to be taken away and buried alive. Soon after, the man desired to sell the brown girl, and he took her to a larger town, where a big fair was in progress. On their arrival there, she saw a small temple, in which stones repre-

sented so many gods and goddesses, and which was visited as a place of pilgrimage.

The brown girl, finding herself, after all these trials, in this uncouth mob, lost her nerve, and sinking to the ground, she burst out weeping. Her captor, who wanted her to look her best in order to fetch a big price, took out his whip and threatened her to behave herself and try to look attractive. It was just at this moment that she heard someone say to him:

"May I tell you the way that will fetch you seventy times more than you ever can get for this girl? Is it not better to walk the steep way and get to safety and to height, than to 'go down' for a momentary little ease?"

"And what is this steep road you want me to walk on?" asked her captor.

"The first step on this path is, to free the slave," was the reply.

"And that also a woman?" laughed her captor, whereupon the other spoke again:

"And who knows that there be a great deal of good in what you call a woman. Besides, was not your mother a woman too? Is not man and woman one from the other? If you think you have rights over them, have they no rights over you? Let me tell you, that paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers."

The brown girl for the moment forgot all her sorrows. She looked up and stared at the speaker, as if he had come from some different world. It was not only that for the first time in all her experiences she had heard the words, "Free the slave," but also

that woman was such an exalted creature that the paradise of the man-child lay beneath her feet.

Then an inconceivable thing happened. Her captor seemed overcome by what he had heard, and, helping her to rise from the ground, he told her that she was free and could go where she liked.

She fell at the feet of the stranger to thank him; but he said:

"You must thank God, your true deliverer, because I only repeated his words to the man who freed you; they are not mine, I am only a messenger, or else a poor mortal like you or anybody else."

The brown girl listened to his beautiful voice with downcast eyes, as though in a trance, and when she looked up he had gone, and she was alone amidst the rough crowd.

To get out of the bustle, and once again to breathe freely, she walked through a side-street; and being very thirsty, she knocked at the door of a house that looked a little more respectable than the others.

A gentle young woman answered her call.

"I am a stranger in this town," said the brown girl to her. "I have no place to go to, and I feel very thirsty."

"Come in, sister," said the young woman, with a friendly smile. "It is our duty and pleasure to have you as our guest."

With these words, she led her to the central room of the house, where three other young women were sitting and chatting. After introducing the brown girl to them as a new-comer to the town, and looking

at her clothes and feet, that had been soiled by the dusty journey, she took her to another room and gave her water to wash herself, and then fetched her own clean robe to provide her with a change.

After her toilet and change, the brown girl returned to the central room, where she found a simple meal of milk and dates laid out before her.

It had been a day of surprises for her. She was so exhausted and so overwhelmed by the kindness of these people that she could hardly utter any words, and only with a deep bow and a warm glance of her eyes she expressed her sincerest gratefulness, and then calmly sat down to the welcome meal. As she sipped the milk, she smiled and said:

"I like this far better than the wine that was used in the nunnery."

She was however anxious to know who her deliverer was; and after having finished her meal she related to the women her morning experience, and enquired who "the Messenger" was.

At the very mention of the word "Messenger" the enthusiasm of the women knew no bounds.

"Yes," said her hostess. "Don't you know he is the Messenger of God, and a mercy to the worlds? Your mention of wine puts me in mind what we were before he came to us.—A drunken, gambling, savage crowd! He told us that, however good wine may be in certain respects, it interfered with a man's self-control and mind, and that it was better to avoid it. He, too, stopped gambling, because, he said, it creates discord and heart-burnings even between friends; and

for us women, indeed, he has proved a blessing. Here is my friend," she continued, putting her arm round one of the young women, "who would be married to-day to a man she did not want, had not the Messenger interfered, and said that no woman, whether a widow or a virgin, was to be married without her consent; and neither a father nor a guardian could compel her against her will, and without the husband fixing a dowry on her. Don't you know that here the men could marry any number of women? Yes, and now for the first time the Messenger has restricted the number of wives to four, and that also only if a man can love all of them with equal love, and if the women care to marry him themselves. But you see, the Book says that it is almost impossible for an ordinary man to love two wives with equal love. Besides, it also says that if two married people disagree and cannot possibly be prevailed upon to live in harmony, then it is better that they should gracefully part, than be compelled to live together in disgrace. And any woman that is divorced, or is a widow, can marry again without a blemish; and all the time she can hold property as her own, without that her husband or any one else dares to interfere with it. And the best of all is, that men and women must now be educated, because it is an equal duty on them both."

The brown girl had listened with great interest.

"But I suppose that all is for free women like you," she said; "What about those who are slaves and beggars like me, who have no one to protect them?"

Her hostess laughed, and said:

"All the slaves that are believers are our brothers and sisters. Don't you know that the most respected person to-day is an old freed negro-slave, who is honoured more than a full-blooded nobleman?"

"How is that?" asked the brown girl, surprised.

"Because the Messenger says, that all men of all nations, castes and colours are equal before God," said her hostess. "Only the one who is the most pious and self-controlled is the most honourable amongst them. And as for beggars: beggary has been made unlawful. Only those people who are not capable of earning their living and are deserving of help are provided for from the collected funds. Only the other day, when a strong man came to the Messenger and begged, he purchased for him a hatchet and told him to become a wood-cutter; and in a short time the man was doing so well, that he fell at the feet of the Messenger and thanked him. He is glad to live on his own earnings; as it is a dishonourable thing to live on charity when one is able to earn one's living by one's own work."

"Does the Messenger not discourage people from acquiring property and possessions?" asked the brown girl, remembering the last teachings she had heard.

"Certainly not," was the reply. "The Messenger says that you may increase property by your own work and honest means as much as you like, if only you remember God constantly, and spend what you earn for His sake."

Here one of the women got up:

"I must be going now," she said, "My little baby daughter must be wanting me."

On hearing this, the brown girl pricked up her ears. The scene of the child burial at her arrival came to her mind.

"Are not baby daughters buried alive when they are born?" she asked.

"You are talking of the horrible days of ignorance," replied the woman. "No one dares to bury his daughter now."

"But is it not necessary for people to have sons to help them to go to heaven?" asked the brown girl.

Another young woman, who had a big open book on her lap, which she had been reading, now looked up and laughed.

"The book says that children and possessions, although they are pleasant, do not in themselves bring you nearer to God. It is only your own actions and beliefs that can do it; but kindness to parents, all the same, is enjoined."

"Who is your god, then? I saw so many stone idols in a small temple when I arrived here first," said the brown girl.

"Yes, my brother himself used to worship those," said the hostess. "But now he has become the leader of idol breakers."

"But who is your god?" repeated the brown girl.

All the women burst out laughing at this question.

"You say 'your god'," said her hostess. "Do you think, then, that our god is different to yours, or to anyone else's? There is only one God of not only

you and us, but of all the universes, seen and unseen."

"Do you mean the God that is in heaven, and his Son?" asked the brown girl again.

Now the women suddenly grew very serious.

"God forbid," they said, with one voice; and then the hostess continued:

"Pray, speak not such blasphemy. God has no sons and daughters nor does he live in heaven or in any particular place. He is on earth as much as in heaven; he is nearer to you than your life-vein, and nearer to everything than its own being."

"But we cannot see him," said the brown girl.

The young woman with the big book now again began to read some lines from it:

"The sight comprehends him not; but he comprehends all sight. He is the light of all the creation, the originator and sustainer of things. He does not belong to any people or place. There is nothing like unto him, and he is entirely above all whatever man can imagine. He cannot be seen but behind a veil. He speaks not to his creatures but through inspiration."

At this moment it being sunset a voice was heard calling to prayer. The women got up and went to wash themselves; and afterwards offered their prayers on the carpet.

The brown girl watched their proceedings, and it was the first time in all her experiences that she saw prayers being offered without the help of a priest, altar, image, idol, or any symbol whatsoever. After they had finished, she asked:

"Do you always wash before you pray?"

"Yes," replied her hostess. "The Messenger says we should appear clean in and out, and beautiful before God."

"Don't you go to the temple to pray?" enquired the brown girl.

"We can go to the prayer house if we like," was the reply. "But the whole earth is God's, and wherever we happen to be, we can pray, and God is before us."

"I remember the days when I had to pray under the orders of the matron in the nunnery," said the brown girl.

The young woman who had put down her book when going to pray, now took it up again and, opening it, she read a few lines aloud:

"'God has not ordered monastries and nunneries, and God does not compel prayers. There is no compulsion in religion. Unless you pray with all your heart and soul, the prayer is of no use, and is a disrespect to God.'"

"But have you no priests to confess your sins to?" asked the brown girl.

"Oh, no," replied her hostess. "There are no priests. Our Messenger says that every individual is directly responsible to God, and woman and man can only confess her or his sins to God, and directly beg His pardon. There is no intercession in the Messenger's religion."

A thought had been rankling in the brown girl's mind. She was all the time remembering her oath of celibacy, and was curious to know if the Messenger

himself was married or not. With a certain amount of hesitation, born of delicacy of feeling, she just stammered out:

"Is the Messenger married?"

"O yes," was the reply. "His first wife, and his great companion in all ups and downs of life, died some time ago. After that, my brother asked him to marry his daughter, and so did some others, because they delighted in the idea. Then he married some widows and one divorced woman and one slave girl, and in all he has about eight wives."

This surprised the brown girl greatly. She had known the opinions of the Pathfinder and the Nazarene about marriage and about being a householder, and she could not reconcile herself that if this Messenger was also a great man, why his conduct should differ from the other two. But she did not utter a word beyond asking her hostess if it was possible for her to meet this great man, because she now, more than ever, was curious to enquire personally from him about so many things.

"Oh, certainly," said her hostess. "The poorest beggar can see him at any time he likes. The Messenger is always available to everybody, and you will find him sitting in front of his cottage."

After thanking her hostess again, the brown girl took leave to go to meet the Messenger. She somehow lost her way, and asked a passer-by to direct her to the Messenger's house. The man looked at her askance:

"I am a poet," he said, "and he does not like poets;

and if you should happen to be a poet too, desist from going to him."

So saying, he turned away without another word.

The brown girl, however, remembered now the directions of her hostess, and in a little while found the cottage, and saw the Messenger there romping with little children. She stopped short at a respectable distance, feeling a bit nervous to approach.

"Please come over if you want to speak to me," he said to her. "There is no need to be afraid of a poor Arab woman's son."

With those words he invited her to sit on a mat, and sitting down himself, he began to mend his shoes.

"I have already heard so much about your religion," said the brown girl, "and I wanted to know more about it from yourself."

"That is not only my religion," he said to her, looking at her with his great luminous eyes, "but it has been the religion of all the people from the beginning of the world: nay, of the sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, the clouds; and all have obeyed it, as it is called 'Submission to the divine will and law'. Nothing can disobey them with impunity. Man, too, must obey; but he should consciously, willingly and gladly submit to it, because there is no change in the laws of God."

"But I have been asked to do so many different things at different times, that I do not actually know what to do, nor what the Will of God is," said the brown girl.

"God has revealed his Will through inspired

persons to all the peoples of the world at different times, according to their needs," said the Messenger. "There has been a book for every period, which reveals the will and law for that same particular period, till again another book is received."

"Is your message, then, the latest message?" asked the brown girl.

"It is not only the latest, but the last revealed message of this special kind, and I am ordered to sum up all the previous revelations, not for one or two peoples, but for all peoples."

"Is this message, then, not also for a particular period?" asked the brown girl.

"No", was the reply, "because this book is not a book of commandments, but of discretions and discriminations, and it advises a different kind of method by which each man will receive revelation individually, and will have no need of those periodical revelations which have been coming now and again. Man is grown up now; there is no more 'thou shalt' for him, or 'thou shalt not'; but the book points out to him the two broad ways, and he is to choose between the two with his own will, and woe to him if he chooses the wrong one. Man and woman are now free to choose, but so much more responsible."

"Pray, can you tell me the method?" asked the brown girl.

"Yes, most willingly," he replied. "The first word of divine direction that I have received, and am supposed to deliver to men, is 'Read'. Read in the name of God that which God has created. God has

made pen the instrument whereby to teach man. And the second words of direction that followed on reading the creation, were 'To write and express what you read.' This is the method suggested that will reveal God to you."

Here a man came up to them, and asked the Messenger: "Can you show us any signs from God, as did the prophets before you?"

The Messenger laughed.

"My good man", he said, "do you want any signs of my power? Then I may tell you that I have no power at all. All power is God's. I do not claim to be an angel either; nor do I claim to possess the keys of the treasury of God. I have no authority over anyone; nor even has the devil. I warn you, and he tempts you. But if you want to see the signs of God, then look around you. Don't you see them in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the change of the day and night, and in the water when it revives the dry earth and gives it life after death, and brings forth the new green? In the movements of the winds and the clouds; in the rising of the sun and the waxing of the moon? Are there no signs in these? And what about yourself? There was a time when you were a thing unheard of—perhaps water. Then you were black clay; then a small life germ, the very name of which is intolerable to you now. And through how many stages in the womb did you pass before you were born? Are there no signs in that? And what about the past history of mankind? Would you only travel all over the earth and see, and walk through the houses

that are untenanted to-day, and learn what laws governed their existence. You would see many signs in that. And what about your own mind? Were you to know it, you would know God. Reflect! Would you not reflect? Then God will be revealed to you in everything that you see round about you. Travel and reflect, my good man. No one henceforth will reveal to you, unless you use your own eyes and ears, your heart and your understanding."

At the mention of history the brown girl grew alert. She suddenly remembered that she had been put on this search for God by History himself, who had said that he was a sign of God; and now she knew that this saying had its source in the Messenger.

When the man had departed, she resumed her talk:

"I am thankful to this man," she said. "Much has become clearer to me through the replies he got from you. Are the old religions necessary for us to study at all, and is the belief in the old prophets necessary?"

"Yes," replied the Messenger, "it is very necessary that you should believe in all the prophets and in all their books, but never compare them as small and great."

"And is this study the aim and end of life?" asked the brown girl.

"The purpose for which man and woman were created is 'Service'," replied the Messenger. "And man's goal is God himself. From God we are, and to God we return."

"Is it necessary to pray? And how should we

pray?" she asked again. And he replied:

"Yes, prayer is necessary to keep you back from wrong action; because right action is the very essence of life; and only by prayer can we be led to what is right and guard against the pitfalls. Strive as hard as you can, and work. The right belief, the right work, the right strive, brings you nearer to the goal, which is God. What else, then, could we beg from God but Himself and the Way by which to reach Him, and the increase of our knowledge of Him? Therefore, pray: 'O, merciful God, show me the sure path on which walked those whom thou hast favoured, and not the path of the confounded. And O, God, I pray, increase me in knowledge.' Let this be your prayer," he continued. "And the last word I tell you is to reflect on the creation of God, and all will be revealed to you."

At this moment he looked up, and with a graceful movement of his hand, drawing the attention of the brown girl to the surroundings, he said:

"God created beautifully! There is no flaw in this creation. Look at it critically. Can you detect a flaw ? Now search again; then re-search it. It is only then that your sight overwhelmed with its perfection, will return on itself, finding its own inadequacy and then the inner eye will work and see things that this outer eye has not seen before, and the inner ear will hear things that this ear has never heard. So you see, the inner and outer are both indispensable; the outer only leads to the inner, and cannot be dispensed with. Nor is what we call 'inner' the last.

There is veil upon veil, and light upon light."

"But has not God created sorrows and pains also?" asked the brown girl.

"Certainly," was the reply. "In the ultimate everything is created by God—what you call evil, and good also. But all their meanings will become clear to you when you reflect, reflect and reflect along the lines that this book is advising you." So saying, he handed her a book, and added: "Two-thirds of this book are perfectly plain; but the remaining one-third of it you will only understand by and by when you reflect and also when you act according to the instructions included in the two-thirds which are plain."

The brown girl apologised for having troubled him so much and thanking him for his advice and the book, she departed.

* * *

As she walked on, a thought crept into her mind.

"Strange," she said to herself. "The book teaches that we must find the way to God and yet it says that God is nearer to us than our life-vein; a thing that is already so near to me, how shall I walk towards it?"

This question once again harassed her and she could find no solution for it. Just at the moment when she thought she had learnt everything, her confusion was greater than ever. Having walked a good deal she began to feel very tired and sat down to rest in a palm-grove. She looked to the East and to the

West and to the North and to the South as if looking for something, or making sure that she was safe. She felt a heaviness over her eye-lids and a golden mist rose before her eyes, such as displays itself at sunrise, and she seemed to see swarms of knights, poets, traders, sailors and thinkers, starting as if from the centre of the earth like the light-rays out of the sun, and going forth to every direction of the earth. Country after country in the East and the West as if set on fire stood emblazoned before her eyes. She saw great masses of slaves rejoicing in freedom. She saw country after country uniting in brotherhood and those that declined to unite she still saw being tolerated and received with open arms of friendship. Movement, trade and travel seemed the vogue of the day on one hand; poetry, philosophy, science and history on the other. Like swarms of bees men seemed to gather nectar from everything and return it tenfold in shape of honey.

Schools, universities, gardens abounded and every court seemed like a nest of singing poets. Men appeared in thousands vying with each other to give to the world all what they knew; each one counting his writings in hundreds of volumes. She saw men carrying plants from one end of the earth to replant them at the other end. Each one seemed bent on putting forth all energy to raise the man in every way, and to beautify the world. She saw men occupied with translating every nation's books if it had any at all, and every religion worth anything, being studied and discussed.

She saw books multiplying into mountains and big buildings being erected for housing them. She saw woman-seers, woman-poets, and learned women free and honoured; the blooms of chivalry and romance growing from under their feet. She saw peasants and professional mechanics at their work in the fields and in the workshop creating and discussing poetry at the same time, and the lowest manual labour being honoured. The titles of honour she heard were: "Worker, striver, knower, server and pioneer."

She saw an Arab holding up scales and crying: "Lo! with this I can weigh one-third of a milligram!" And another one had a convex mirror in his hand and was talking of refraction and reflection of light. Every department of life she saw being rummaged and searched and 're-searched'.

She saw the same author writing books on philosophy, horses, precious stones, plants, flowers and stars. She saw men unearthing the true history of peoples in the East and in the West.

Wonderful marble-palaces rose like fairy abodes and kings worked with their own hands only to feel that they had lawfully earned their living instead of using the money of the country. She saw idols falling to the ground in the East and in the West and religious reformers rising in the East and in the West at the same time, reforming their old religions to bring them in line with that of the book she possessed.

She saw the tide sweep away monastries with all their cobwebs and drink, and monks coming into disrepute, and mendicancy being discounted; and

where monastries had disappeared colleges and hospitals rising; and in place of bogs and fens, she saw fresh green pastures and gardens with fountains, fruits and flowers appearing. She saw dead languages being sub-planted by new ones, and romantic poetry being expressed through their medium. Then she saw every institution of those innovators being copied and adopted, specially by the West.

Meanwhile she saw hordes rising in the East who burnt all the books, and at this stage she saw an enormous form of a creature full of life being embalmed and put into a cage to protect it, and she saw the living creature by and by losing the use of its limbs and becoming a mummy incapable of defending itself from the attacks of the passer-by and incapable of any progress at all.

Every institution which had been started, now she saw being developed and further developed. She saw the West bound to trade and travel and big machines turning out thousands of books and the trodden serfs becoming more and more free; and the search in every department, started by the Central people, continued with more and more vigour, by the Westerners.

She saw education for man and woman becoming compulsory in the West, and she heard the cry of "Equality" and "Fraternity" finding an echo there.

She saw that the search for knowledge was being rewarded more and more by disclosures of sources of power by nature to man; and she saw one nation called Anglo-Saxon in the forefront of protest against the old, and most willing to accept the new; and she

saw them putting an end to slavery and recognising woman's individuality and giving her rights to hold property. But then she saw a sudden reversion in the scene; she heard a man proclaim that they all were descended from the Ape. Although there was nothing new in this idea for the brown girl, she saw that it disturbed the balance of the whole West and that they got into their heads that they were all monkeys and that since the monkeys had no thought of God and yet lived and throve, they believed they need not too.

It was quite enough, they said, if they ate, fought and bred like the monkeys; the stronger having all his own way.

"The struggle of life," said the one, and "Might is Right," said the other.

"Morality is only the creation of old women who cannot protect themselves," said a third.

She saw destructive machines of all sorts; ships like sharks going under water and ships like birds of prey in the air; and thousands of other wonderful agents of destruction, and she saw man in the West looking drunk with his own importance. She saw each jumping at the throat of the other; every instrument, every tool that they possessed they hurled at each other's heads.

From under the water, from above the earth they assailed each other, till the whole West appeared like a field of carnage. After that she saw peoples in sackcloth and ashes.

However, what she saw now seemed a little more comforting. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes

she saw the nobility of manual work being recognised and the workmen asserting themselves as respectable human beings.

She saw a great nation in the far west stopping drink wholesale, and recognising the rights of individuals to put an end to matrimonial connections if they so desired.

But to her grief she saw that on the whole still no substantial change in the spirit took place. The rush for knowledge still continued; but only for personal ends and personal power. It had lost its original purpose and direction.

The whole scene now appeared to her like a gigantic machine that had lost its brakes and direction, running at a furious speed not knowing whither, though blazing with dazzling electric light. Horrified by the zig-zag movements of this tremendous machine, the brown girl rushed up and all of a sudden found herself in the arms of her friend, the black girl.

* * *

"Oh, I am so delighted to see you here in this grove!" cried the brown girl, kissing her: "I was really getting frightened," and looking at her tenderly she continued—"Haven't we reason to thank that great dramatist; but for whom we would not have the pleasure of having you here amongst us? But say, have you missed me since I have been away on my travels?"

"Haven't I," said the black girl. "Specially

because Miss West fell out with my Dramatist Love. They seemed to disagree on one point. He told her that she could not find God in the way she thought; while she claimed to have found God inside everybody."

"If that is so," said the brown girl. "Then she is very lucky indeed. What a wonderful experience it must be, to approach everybody even the lowest and the least with reverence, because there is God in it. I am sure now her outlook must have improved and she must be looking at the world with different eyes."

"But tell me where have you been all this time?" asked the black girl.

"Oh, that is a long story to tell," replied the brown girl. "I am glad for one thing at least that I have learnt to prize you more than ever, for no one who has any sense can deny you precedence. But for you we should not exist. You are the first born and the favourite of the earth's parent. All his energy he concentrated on you; in the beginning your people were the high-priests of human life, all glory to them. Even when power seemed apparently to have passed out of their hands they were the most desired. For some mysterious reason everyone whether in the East or West sought them. They signalised themselves as the best that 'serve'. Their vitality, their wonderful patience, their faith were admitted on all hands and thus the crown of Service fell on them. Who knows? I have a feeling that those that are humbled shall be exalted and who knows that the despised may yet one day become the corner stone;

but tell me," she continued, changing the subject: "How do I find you here so far from home?"

"Don't you know that there is a large gathering to take place quite near here?" said the black girl. "All the prophets and great men from all parts of the world are supposed to assemble here."

"Is it then another Peace Conference?" asked the brown girl.

"Yes, if you wish to call it so," replied her friend. "But perhaps the real peace conference, not one of those that are held at Geneva where the only question is how to kill human beings; what mode is to have the preference, germs, poison gases or air-bombs."

"How interesting," said the brown girl. "I happen just to possess a book which says that the only possible way to know anything is to believe in all the great men and their books. So I will be delighted to accompany you; but how I wish that Miss West was with us too, she is so beautiful and clever." So saying she got up and both girls started for their destination.

In a short time they were within view of the wonderful place. Even from some distance they could see the entrance-arch gleaming with soft mysterious starry lights; and as they approached it, they met a professor with a book in his hand which he was very anxious to show to everybody: "Did Jesus ever live?" was the title of the book.

He was voluble in his explanations that the Nazarene never lived, when the black girl burst out:

"But then, who wrote the Bible?"

"I see," said the professor. "You haven't been to school; the Bible is only a supposed biography of that Jesus who never lived, and it has been corrected and recorrected for centuries according to the wisdom of the aftercomers."

"What?" said the brown girl. "Do you mean that all those old religious books are unauthentic?"

"Certainly," replied the professor. "You will not find a date or a name of an author on any of them. They all have been attributed to writers who could not possibly have written them.

"The real writers have taken cover under the name of some mythical personage to enhance the value of their performances. Then there have been interpolations after interpolations later, from age to age. Have you read the Mahabharatha and the Bhagvad Gita? Then you will understand what I mean. Besides, are these persons called prophets any different to other writers or poets?"

"You may be right Mr. Professor," came a sober voice of a man who looked very cosmopolitan and whose nationality could not possibly be detected. "But you yourself make a difference between an ordinary writer and a poet, and has it never struck you that the greatest poets, philosophers, scientists and authors of the world consciously or unconsciously have enlisted themselves as followers of those whom you call prophets? As for the books, interpolations certainly have taken place in most of those prehistoric books, caused by fools and knaves, who either considered themselves cleverer than the writers, or wanted

to serve some of their low personal ends by attributing what suited them to those great men. But all the same; there are landmarks in that wood which cannot possibly be mistaken and which to a knowing reader indicate the truth as clearly as the midday-sun."

"O yes, to the believing ones no doubt," said the professor: "But you cannot convince me that religion has any survival value. Lord God got his Conge long ago. What we want is Power and get it as we can. To the strong belongs the world, all else are Myths and fairy-tales for babes."

"Mr. Professor," said the brown girl. "I have got a book here whose historic authenticity cannot be denied. It was written thirteen hundred years ago and it says that the Jesus did live. So I suppose that evidence is enough for me and I don't need your book just to help me to doubt."

So saying she took a step forward, and the black girl followed. Near the entrance they came across people of all sorts. Most of them propagandists, advertisers, nothing-to-do-curious ones, and thrill-mongers. There was also a sprinkling of the serious sort. Some who called themselves scientists, some rationalists. But the joy of the girls was beyond measure when they suddenly spied Miss West, the white girl.

"Oh, how delightful to meet you here; we were just talking about you," said the brown girl, shaking hands with her. "You see I had to come," replied the white girl. "Although I was very hard-pressed with other business engagements; yet you can't let an

occasion like this go by without taking advantage of it. Trade wants advertisement and you can't get a better occasion for canvassing than international gatherings of all peoples of the world as this one is."

"What about God? I thought you were also one of the seekers?" asked the brown girl.

"Oh yes," replied the white girl. "In my younger days I was also curious, and then I found that God was within me, you and everybody else."

"I see," said the brown girl. "Then you have actually found him and need not seek any more. I wish I was as lucky. But the more I search him the less I find him and the more confounded I grow. The last one whom I enquired from about God told me that it was not an easy job to find him, and that I had first to seek the outer and then the inner.

"He said the outside was as important as the inside and could not be dispensed with."

"You see I have no time for these intricacies," said the white girl. "My hands are full of business at present."

"You are right," said the black girl. "I have also found comfort in digging the garden and looking after my piccaninnies, and I haven't the enthusiasm that I used to have when I started on the search for God. One gets wearied as one grows old, but still, in moments of leisure my thoughts continuously revert to my old search and I can't get rid of it quite. Although even now my little ones may be crying."

At this moment they met a man who looked like a pedagogue. When he saw the three girls he accosted

them. "If you don't mind, please stop here a while. I would like to tell you about God as I have no doubt you are here to hear about him."

"I think I have met you before at the stock-exchange, and would rather like to know from you about certain shares," said the white girl.

"Oh that's another matter," laughed the man. "I can't give you my secrets. No tips for the present, no tips."

"I see," said the white girl coldly. "You would easily part with all the secrets of your God, but you are unwilling to part with your tricks of the trade."

"That is so," said the brown girl as they passed on. "I have met lots of such fellows who think God is the cheapest commodity, and they make a trap out of God's name to catch the credulous prey. That way, I rather like the ancients who resented other people worshipping their gods and considered their gods their best treasure and would not suffer anyone to encroach upon it."

At their right side now they saw a sacrosanct man who looked like a dignitary of a church. He was vociferous in decrying what he called doubtful inter-religious conferences.

"It is utter nonsense," he said. "This modern craze. Either one religion is true or the other. They are making a hash out of religions. No man can be saved by his actions. Salvation comes only through the blood of the Nazarene."

Here another man by his side burst out:

"You have forgotten the great one who gave you

the ten commandments without which your whole new testament will be nothing. There is no greater prophet than him that the world has seen."

Then a third man who stood on the Eastern side put in a word: "You are all bluffing. The only true religion is that of the Vedas and even your leaders were actually old Indians whose souls have transmigrated to your lands."

The girls thought there would be a scuffle in a minute and they would go on each other's throats; so to avoid an unpleasant scene, they hastened to enter the portal. They however found their access barred by the diminutive size of the passage, when they heard a voice saying: "Bow your heads if you seek admission," and as soon as they had done so, the aperture widened itself to an enormous extent and they passed easily through. The moment they had stepped inside, a man approached to receive them. He had a book in his hand, the cover of which bore the title, "Critique of Pure Reason."

"I am glad you all three have come," he said courteously; but they could hardly find an answer as the scene that disclosed itself before their eyes amazed them utterly. They had expected some sort of enclosure or hall; but they could see no walls, no boundaries of any sort. It looked like a limitless expanse. Everything that they could possibly conceive met their view. Under their feet they found flower-laden pasture; blooms of all sorts which they had seen before, and those that they had never seen.

An old bunyan tree standing in the midst of its

daughter trees that had grown out of its shoots was the nearest to them. Then there were ancient oaks by the side of tremendous peepal and fig trees. Mangoes and Spanish chestnuts blended almost unrecognisably and in the far distance there were towering palms, both in groves and singly growing. Here and there between the trees rose rocks of various forms and colours, some of them emitting perfumed steam and others spouting crystal water that formed pools around them which abounded with variegated fire-fishes, coral and pearl oysters.

At the edges of the pools grew the lotus and the asphodel; while along the pastures the proud tulip and modest violet bloomed side by side.

The oriental pearl-jasmin mingled with the rustic daisy and amidst them rose champack and syringa trees. All the woods and meadows were thronged with animals of all kinds big and small, wonderful birds, golden beetles, and hundreds of butterflies and bees.

Here and there in the clearest blue skies now and again clusters of clouds formed and dispersed. Now the South wind brought warmth and fragrance and now the North came with refreshing coolness. Now the East wind and then the West wind blew, all caressing each other, and the most remarkable thing that the girls saw was that a continuous metamorphosis was in progress. Nothing seemed to remain the same, and no spot appeared twice in the same aspect.

Hundreds of thousands of people, of all sorts and descriptions, from the deepest coloured ebony to the

most colourless Albino with white hair and white eye-brows, that had collected there, were moving about on the lawns and under the trees that formed arches like aisles.

Yet there was no feeling of overcrowding and everyone seemed to have plenty of free space to move in; while mingled with the song of birds mysterious melodious music issued from the woods. Directly connected by a long passage with this space where the girls stood, they saw a spot sufficiently raised to be prominently in view. The ground there, instead of a green lawn appeared blue like the sky, overstrewn with brilliant starry flakes providing the verisimilitude of the heavens; while the sky above this place appeared pearl-white, softly and uniformly lit without dazzle and seemed to reach an unlimited depth without changing its colour.

The girls saw that on this strange spot a number of people had collected.

* * *

So far they had not moved a step from the entrance where they had been received.

They were now startled by the voice of a man next to them, who said:

"I believe that the only hope of humanity lies in art," and as the girls turned round two of them recognised in the speaker the great German philosopher-poet.

"There is great Goethe," said the brown girl, when

another man with a long white beard replied:

"Yes, and specially if it happens to be bad art."

"No one can mistake him," said the black girl; "It is the great Russian."

"What is the use of painting nude figures and composing sensual airs," continued the Russian with acrimony. "And writing vulgar poetry which only degrades humanity, specially when it is created with the clear purpose to stimulate the lower passions."

"I think my friend is correct," said the third, whom the brown girl recognised to be Plato, the son of Ariston whose acquaintance she had already made. "I myself have found that most of the poets drag us down to Hades," he added.

"Yes," said another, who wore an Arab gown. "But some of the poets pull us up to heaven, too; at least that is how I have been told and taught."

The white girl who had been introduced to this man by an American professor, knew him to be Ghazali, the Arabian philosopher.

"Yes, I agree," said the Russian.

"You all don't seem to realise that science is more valuable than art," said another, whom the brown girl knew to be Roger Bacon. "I love science all the more," he added; "Because I learnt it from the Arabs with a great deal of trouble and just therefore, was kept in prison for years. But look!" he interrupted himself as two other men advanced towards them: "Here is Al-hazan." While Goethe recognising the other man, added, "and Newton."

"You are right," now said the man who had

received the girls at the gate. "There is nothing like observing facts. You can't continually wait and wait for inspiration; but even knowledge gained by observation deals only with the phenomenon. You know as much as I do that the knowledge acquired through the senses does not disclose reality; you are on a sounder basis when you base your knowledge on pure reason."

"You are right," said the Arabian philosopher," but as you yourself found, reason itself is wanting. The rational no doubt is superior to the sensuous, but it is a real mistake to rule out any other form of superior knowledge than the rational. Probably there *is* one, in comparison to which rational knowledge itself might be found as defective as it is superior to the sensuous. So you see my friend, Reality is not behind one veil but behind many veils."

"Universal mind is the only reality that we call God."

"That is Hegel," whispered the white girl, listening attentively as he continued.

"And the spirit as it is driven back into itself finds itself separated from the infinite absolute essence, and that is fallen man."

Ghazali turned to him and smiled. "That way, not only universal mind but universal 'physique' as well, we may call God," he remarked. "As I mentioned before, reality lies behind many veils and what you call mind is only one of them. Indeed, the mental world itself is only one form of manifestation like the physical world and there may be still further forms

than mental. But what I really don't understand is your use of the word 'spirit'."

"I agree with what you say about different forms of manifestation; I myself have felt like that," said a Jewish philosopher who was easily recognised as Spinoza. "I am sure Master Mamonides thinks the same," he concluded, turning to a learned man at his side who smiled and said, "No doubt; no doubt," and two ancient Hindu philosophers, one of them being addressed as Badryana and the other as Kapila, also nodded assent, and Badryana said: "Yes, the illusion is created by more than one imposition." And Kapila added: "Indeed! call it illusion or ne-science, it is all the same."

After that a Chinese philosopher named Chuang-tzu spoke.

"All of you seem to lose sight of the fact that pure knowledge can only result from pure Action and that both are inseparably related."

"That's a good reminder!" cried the Russian philosopher. "That's what I have been saying all these days. When greed and consequent murder which you call war, and all the unchristian acts are performed without the slightest compunction, what could art and science be? Let humanity first stop its outrageous conduct before it deserves to have purer knowledge. Yes, talking of knowledge when hundreds of thousands are being crushed under the heel, massacred and starved out of existence."

"But don't you see that no state can exist without thousands working under the heel?" said a great

Greek philosopher, whom they called Aristotle. "People must be made to work and the working-man cannot concern himself with virtue or knowledge. However adversely criticised, I stick to my opinion that slavery should be a permanent institution, but that slaves should be fed, and that every state necessarily must have trading and labouring classes; but of course, those cannot be expected to become virtuous. And I likewise still hold that this our earth is eternal, whatever others might say contrary to it."

"We want to do away with the idea of private property and make every man a work-man, while you seem to think that the workmen can have no part in virtue?" said the Russian, and then Ghazali's voice was heard again.

"Yes, my friend, you are right," he said. "We consider nobody virtuous unless he works; although I do agree so far with Aristotle that a slave might find it hard to become virtuous, because the first necessity for becoming so is to be free to act as one wishes. Freedom to act and right action make you virtuous."

"All very well about providing food and making people's lives easy," put in another man; "but don't you think by your interference in economic matters you will breed a less fit type to survive, which otherwise would be excluded by the struggle of life?"

"I see this is Herbert Spencer," said the white girl, and then they heard the name of Karopotkin, a Russian scholar, who said: "Mutual aid my friends, mutual aid, and not competition as you think, has been the key-note of civilization."

"Yes, remind him of that!" said a stern voice, "I almost feel like calling him names; his struggle for life he can never forget, and yet he cannot see the simple fact that the fitness of mind is governed by different laws than fitness of the body; that man is no longer only an animal. But these professors just like their Greek masters, are all oceans of words, words, words. We want the winged word of a poet to enlighten us," he concluded looking at Goethe.

"That is unmistakably Carlyle," said the white girl to her friends, and they all three passed on and went to another interesting group further ahead.

* * *

As they came within ear-shot they heard a young man, who seemed rapt with the beauty of the scene, exclaim:

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.
Its loveliness increases; it never fades into nothingness!"

Then he bowed to an elderly man dressed in Elizabethian costume who was approaching him and who remarked,

"These were wonderful words."

"And what of your wonders," said the young man with enthusiasm.

"Your words that the world can never cease to sing; how many times have I recited your lovely lines; for instance: 'Men must endure their going hence even as their coming hither; ripeness is all!' If only the

world could realise the meaning of these lines; and oh, how often has the grand truth of your wonderful words disclosed itself to me. 'Inconstancy falls off ere it begins'." Then he continued almost in ecstasy. "And your immortal lines:

"'There is not the smallest orb which thou beholdest
But in its motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the youngest cherubims;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.'

"And who has not realised the futility of this earth when reading:

"'The cloud-capped hills, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant, faded,
Leave not a rack behind; we are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded by a sleep.'"

"Did you hear that?" said the brown girl, "We are told a different tale here than by Aristotle, who asserts that the earth is eternal." Then turning to the black girl she added, "I remember that one of the curious ones you met had said that Shakespeare was quite Godless, but you see, he is talking of religion, only in the latest form."

"Look!" cried now the young enthusiastic poet, "here comes my friend Schiller. I still remember his Epigram, 'Earnest is Life'; and also his heroic 'Maid of Orleans'."

The poet thus complimented, smiled and said gently: "Thank you, it is very good of you to mention trifles."

"I can see Milton there," said the brown girl, "I recognise his ringlets. His blind eyes did not prevent him from seeing; and who can forget his sonnet on his own blindness."

"Indeed," added the white girl. "Those also serve who only stand and wait."

"I believe that is Walt Whitman behind him," said the black girl. "I do love his 'Leaves of Grass', and she began to recite:

"'I swear I begin to see love with sweeter spasms
than that which responds love;
I swear I see what is better than to tell the best,—
It is always to leave the best untold.'"

"I don't know whether I would not rather prefer love that is responsive," said the white girl.

Meanwhile Goethe and the great Russian and Ghazali joined the group, bringing a friend with themselves whom the Russian introduced to the others as Victor Hugo.

"This is the author of 'Les Miserables', a genuine work of art," he said: and then suddenly Goethe hailed two approaching men calling out with delight: "Kalidas! and also Vyas!" and shaking hands with them, he continued, turning to Kalidas, "I have not yet forgotten the beautiful lines you make Sakuntala's lover say:

"'She is God's vision of pure thought,
Composed in his creative mind:

So plays my fancy when I see
How great is God, how lovely she.' "

"Very kind of you to flatter me," said Kalidas smilingly, "I thought I was too ancient to be of any interest."

Schiller just then brought two ancient Greeks and said to Goethe, "Here is our Aeschylos and Europides whom you love so much."

"Truly I do," said Goethe embracing them. "And it was only as a token of admiration that I re-cast your Iphyginia," he said to Europides.

Then he beheld some more poets coming towards the group and he said: "Here is a whole batch of my old friends, the Muslim poets, Rumi, Hafiz and the great lover Ibn-farid." He also saw one who had modestly remained behind and whom he could not recognise.

"Who is that?" he asked, "I do not seem to know him, but he has a wonderful face."

Then welcoming these three he laid his hand upon Rumi's shoulder and looking into his eyes he said: "It was you who set me to think of the Metamorphosis of plants. What a new world was opened to me when I read your lines:

" 'Man appeared in the class of inorganic things,
He passed therefrom into that of plants,
For long he lived as one of them;
Then passed he from the vegetative state
To that of animal, but not remembered
His life as plant, except the inclination

He felt towards them, specially at the season
Of spring and flowers sweet; then was man drawn
From animal into the human state.
Wherefore, then, fear that death will lower us?
Maybe that when I die I might appear
As fullfledged angel.' "

Rumi smiled and thanked his friend for the acknowledgment; and Goethe enquired from those present about the fourth, and unknown poet.

Hearing this, the brown girl, who knew him came forward and told Goethe that he was called "Latif" and that he deserved to be better known than he really was, and so saying she recited one of his couplets:

"Neither the control of desire
Nor the emotional abandonment
Concerns me any more."

"That is very interesting," said Goethe, "Do you know anything else of his?"

Whereupon the brown girl continued:

" 'Where no 'no' and no 'yes', no good and no evil exists
That still is within the reach of human idea;
But where that Beauty is, that we dote upon,
No sight can reach there.' "

Then she went on:

"I have so often remembered his verses in his dramatic poem called 'Seafarers' in which he says,

" 'See that you daily oil your little skiff, which is constantly exposed to water in the midst of which it stands.'

And those lines always remind me of yours in Faust who after achieving his life-work says:

"'He alone earns freedom as well as life, who daily must win them anew.'"

"Splendid, splendid," said Goethe, "I am longing to come in closer touch with him."

The brown girl now noticed that Schiller stepped forward to meet three newcomers, one of them looking like an Oriental scholar.

"Welcome Montesque, Gibbon," he said. While the former introduced his friend to him saying, "I have no doubt that you know this great man, being a historian yourself. He is Ibn-Khaldun, the great Arabian historian, and the father of the philosophy of history."

This interested the brown girl immensely, she had heard of this wonderful man and it was a real joy to her to see him in person. Then she saw that Carlyle also had joined this group of historians and she heard the white girl say:

"Look, how many people Goethe knows. Almost all the ancients as well as moderns. I love his lines 'to the brooklet', when he questions it wherefrom it came and whereto it was going, and the sweet simple answer of the brooklet.

"'The One who has called me from the rock,
He, I think, will be my guide."

And the brown girl remarked, "Are not the lines in his Divan to-day turned into an actual fact.

"'He who knows himself and others
Here will also see
That the East and West are brothers—
Parted ne'er shall be.'"

* * *

"Come let us make a move," said the black girl. By this time they had seen hundreds more of occidental and oriental poets, men and women, most of them very well-known faces to them. They all seemed entranced by the beauty of the scene.

Now the throngs began to move forward towards the raised spot which seemed carpeted with the 'blue skies'. And as they proceeded the multitude grew bigger and bigger.

A wonderful music reached them from all sides. One minute it was, as if they heard a melody from the far off blossoming cherry grove, what is called the music of the spring festival of the Chinese; another time from the still further forest of shady bunyan-trees they heard the ancient 'Ragas' of Ind. Now again they seemed to hear Andalusian, now Italian strains. Then they could detect Bach and Mozart and again some gipsy Gitanas, the very name of which connected their origin with the old Indian music. Between these came travelling on the Southern breeze the crooning of Spirituals, like so many sighs of human-beings who could, as if, otherwise not express themselves. Now and again they even saw some of the greatest composers in company of other great artists and scientists. They saw martyrs who had

sacrificed their lives for faith, for beauty, for goodness, or fighting tyranny, vice and disease.

Most prominent amongst them stood the benefactors of the human race. The great humane Kings and Queens, administrators and soldiers. And as they passed on, they came across throngs and throngs of saints, seers, and mystics, most of whom proceeded with calm silence as if their lips were sealed and their limbs moved as rhythmically as does the motion of breathing itself. It was amongst those that the brown girl with her friends came across the great Apostle Paul. They found him busy talking to someone whom they did not know.

"I never did believe in Greek wisdom," he said. "I always called it merely a show of wisdom rather than wisdom itself; but I do agree with Aristotle when he said that the northern nations know nothing but fighting. Is it not clear from the fact that even the Gentiles who were the most cultured amongst them and head and shoulders above others, could only represent their God by a spear? The Christian people who call God "Love" indulge only in hate. Is it not strange that they worship Christ as a lamb and yet they delight to call themselves foxes, wolves and lions? Such are also their insignia, either wolves, lions or eagles and they are proud of them and delight in them. I have heard that the greatest poet of the most advanced race amongst them is called Shake-'Spear' and in their allied race the greatest poet's Christian name is 'Wolf-gang'. Before these people became Christians they used to wear bull's horns on their

heads to frighten each other, and now they delight in wearing skulls, and cross-bones. What an irony that these people should still profess that their object of worship is "Love" and the meek Lamb."

The girls were most interested in this talk, specially the white girl, who seemed to hear something she had never thought about before.

Not far from them a host of distinguished occidental and oriental sages met their view. They were Thomas of Kempis, Swedenborg, Ibn-Arabi, Suharwerdi, Kabir and the great Nanik amongst them; and these were just the very few that the girls could recognise.

Suddenly they realised that the elevated spot had disappeared from their view, and that the people whom they had seen collected there were directly in their midst almost shoulder to shoulder.

"I know at least three or four of these," said the black girl, while the white girl's eyes beamed with a sudden joy.

"Look!" she cried. "There I see the God who came on earth to share and bear the result of our sin!"

But the brown girl was quite dumb and bewildered, because her whole life practically rose before her. She did not know at whom to gaze first; as she loved and honoured so many of them intensely.

With rapture she beheld the Flute-prince Krishna. There was the Pathfinder, the Nazarene, and the Messenger. She saw the great leader of Israel with his white flowing beard and Zaradushtra the prophet of good and evil spirits, of whom she had just been

able to catch a glimpse when leaving for Ind. She spied the great Manu who had been their first guide after their arrival in Ind. On the other side she saw the two men Lao-tze and Confucius she had met in the cherry-blossom grove, and she saw the wise Greek Socrates who had taught her how to argue, together with Akhnaton whom she had met in the land of the crocodile. She also saw Solomon the beautiful prince of the vine-yard and hundreds of others, some of whom she had a dim recollection of, and others which she did not know at all. The remarkable thing was that although these people were in one way directly amongst them, still they seemed to be lifted entirely above them and every word they spoke seemed to reach to the other end of space without any help of Radio or Microphone.

They conversed only amongst themselves and did not address the multitude which had converged to this spot from all directions and was now at a standstill and seated on the skyey meadow.

* * *

"It fell to your province to make such a meeting as this possible on earth," said Zaradushtra to the Messenger; and the Nazarene faintly smiled and said:

"Yes, human beings still remain perverse children," and turning to the leader of Israel, he continued, "When you emphasized that prophets will come after you, they would point blank refuse to accept anyone that actually followed, and when I said that I would send them a comforter, they expected that an angel

with wings should appear amongst them; but to no human being would they lend their ears; and when the Messenger told them that they had to believe in all prophets and in all books, those that were mentioned to them, and even in those that were not mentioned, and that no other prophet they need wait for, they would insist that he could not be the last, but that there should still come many more. They delight in perversity. If you want them to believe one thing, just say the other; if it were only possible for us to do that."

"Yes," said Krishna in a hilarious tone, "They are worshipping most of us, but they don't know what they worship in us. The worst mischief always arises from the people who profess to be one's followers. It almost reminds one of the saying 'Save me from my friends'."

"The greater the wonder, that with all that, the law still works and even turns the ignorance and folly to its use as if necessary co-efficients of the scheme," said the Pathfinder. "They insist that there should be no mystery. Tell them as much as you like that mystery must and has to remain till you are capable to see all. But what is the use? You may appoint very learned professors to teach a child, but what can the child learn beyond the A.B.C.? All else can only be hinted at and made fairy-tales out of, which may carry some sense to the child. Frighten him with hobgoblins and promise him visits from the fortune-fairy. They would question about certain things and when one tells them what at all they can

possibly understand, they cry out.

"That is not possible! like the toad that could not believe that the ocean was bigger than his well."

"The worst type are those," said Akhnaton, "who call themselves the leaders of the people and then deliberately hide the truth. It would be excusable if they did it for the benefit of those whom they lead, but it is always for their own benefit. I have bitter experiences of the priests."

"Don't remind me of them," said the great leader of the Israelites.

"Well, I suppose they think the best way to lead the flock is to way-lay them, and the best way to feed them is to feed upon them," said the Nazarene. "Haven't they made me a perfect householder, the very emblem of procreation? They saw nothing in me but the upholder of the family and child-birth."

"Yes," said Zaradushtra. "And when I introduced the institution of family as a sacred thing and would insist on it, they affected nomadism."

"That has been the fate of most of us," said the Pathfinder, turning to the Nazarene. "You, my brother, taught love and meekness and I positively dissuaded them from worshipping their gods and now you can watch your and my followers and see for yourselves what has happened."

"Indeed," said the Nazarene. "The latest development amongst them is that my teaching to give up property is being interpreted by a certain class as 'Hand over your property to us; it is unchristian that you should possess it,' everyone conveniently

forgets that every individual himself was to give up his property; not to ask someone else to hand over his to him. They quote my saying that the rich will not go to Heaven to those who are rich, but in their own case they yearn to become rich, because, I suppose, they despise to go to Heaven themselves."

"Oh well," said the Messenger, "We have done our jobs and obeyed the command. It is lucky that we were not constituted their guardians. He that made us and them knows his business best. I suppose even discord and differences must be, as we all know. I could also sing a song of my followers who have begun to believe in everything exactly the opposite to what I taught them to believe."

"You see, my loved brother," he went on, turning to the Nazarene, "A thing that you clearly mentioned and I repeated ad nauseum, they have actually turned upside down. 'Struggle of Life,' that is how they call it. As if you had not said that the righteous shall inherit the earth, and as if I had not repeated that as soon as they deviated from the eternal law and were not exactly in line with it, the command will be 'away with these unjust people, and someone else better and fitter shall take their place,' as if the survival of the fittest were a new idea. How completely they have forgotten your teaching that the less you consider yourself fit, the more fit you are to survive. They cannot be made to understand that man's fitness lies in making the unfit one fit to exist."

"It is everywhere the same," said Confucius. "I mentioned to my people not to worry about wor-

shipping spirits of their ancestors and that is a long time ago; but still to-day it is exactly the same; they do what they did thousands of years ago; while my friend Lao-tze spoke to them like my honoured friend the Pathfinder of the 'way', and like my esteemed friend the Nazarene, of returning good for evil, but no one even has cared to understand him.

"The only thing they do is to fill up their temples with stone images of real and imaginary pathfinders running into thousands and worship them; without troubling to find out, as my noble friend Krishna said, what they really worship in them."

"The very mention of the fact that I had received a 'Voice' directing me, brought me a cup of poison," said Socrates, "But that is of little account. Poison does not hurt. If they had only taken some notice of what I said; but that was not to be, and in a short time they themselves had disappeared."

"The worst that has taken place in my land is that those teachings of mine which were only meant for a certain period, are still stuck to," said Manu.

"People can never realise what my brother the Messenger has clearly taught, that every period had a book, and that a thing that is necessary and beneficial at one time begins to be a hindrance and an obstruction at the other. That stability itself easily passes into stagnation and stagnation into death; just as the followers of my friend the leader of the Israelites thought that our Nazarene was trying to subvert their religion, so the Brahmans still think that the great Pathfinder was only a demon that had come to destroy

their gods and religion.

"They still stick to their caste system as if this was meant to be a law for all times, never to be changed. For thousands of years they have kept their idols as their personal property, and still resent other people sharing them. They still cannot see that all these things had their uses for a time and that they have now become a positive hindrance in the way of their advancement and progress.

"The same with the sacred cow. Since the Pathfinder brought the whole animal world in relationship to man and since his relationship is scientifically established, of what use is the recognition of relationship of one animal to-day? However useful an animal may be from material point of view, it has no more that spiritual value which at one time it possessed. Still they would insist on keeping up the old rites and rituals. The greatest need of that country is an iconoclast, to destroy the out of date and unprofitable forms."

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"That is so," said Zaradushtra. "Man even now cannot sufficiently realise that what he was asked to do had not only an immediate purpose, but far-reaching effects. For example, the man that I addressed in my time was still very near his brother animal. He did not only roam aimlessly and hated any settled condition or responsibility, but was incapable of paying Attention to anything. His infant mind which was just born and was not sufficiently

conscious, was not able to fix its attention on anything for long. *The man roamed and his mind wandered.* The greatest necessity was to train it to attend to objects and not to flit about.

"Fire at that period was the most necessary and therefore the most desirable thing; a boon newly acquired and difficult to kindle. To let man watch it and not let it go out was made a religious duty. The immediate result that it was to achieve, was to teach the infant mind to attend. The owning of land and its culture was the second method. Its object was through calling things 'my own', to create the 'Mine'. The 'I' was just emerging and 'Mine' was to augment it.

"Also the bull, the most necessary helper of man to plough his land tied by self-interest to him, was the best to teach him at that period that the animal world was related to him. That he was a part of the same world to which the animal belonged. Thus, the Holy Bull, the eternal fire, the land culture and personal property became the greatest tools of creating his individuality, that is, his mind as an entity in itself and by itself.

"Up to this time Taboo was the only inhibitive force in human life. This was generalised by me and raised to a moral system with two opposites, good and evil; so that the permanent centres of inhibition be formed in the very body of man to restrict the old unhindered reflex activities and the waste of energy they entailed, and allow new grooves of activity to be formed. I cannot see how it is not yet clear to man

that not the conditions that were set on him were important in themselves or unchangeable, but that the purpose they were directed to achieve, was all important.

"Although you all already know what I say, yet it does one good to speak sometimes of the part that one was graciously assigned to play."

* * *

"You are right my brother," said Manu. "It was your great task to draw man's notice from sensuous objects to the abstract powers.

"Those that left your country irritated by your innovation, not grown up enough to conceive non-sensuous objects and powers, arrived themselves in time at the same stage, and it was assigned to me to make them understand the three abstract powers of creating, preserving and destroying.

"The strictest ritual had to be installed to discipline the mind, and the nobility of ploughing, that you had yourself taught, had to be established to distinguish them from the Nomads or irresponsible men. The joint family-life had to be created to enlarge the sphere of relationships.

"Side by side it was also my duty to fix up castes, i.e., hereditary specialization of functions in a community. This was necessary at this period because the capacity of the individual being then very limited, it was necessary in the interest of communal life and efficiency to carry on, to create specialised hereditary dispositions for certain tasks.

"The trouble was, as I said before, that even when these three generalised abstract powers were given to them for worship, still most of them could not grasp these and carried on with the nature-powers as objects of worship.

"So with all the addition of advanced forms, lower forms persisted, and the attention of the mind to its own detriment remained divided between them."

"My task as you know, was almost similar to yours," said Moses, the leader of the Israelites, "With this difference, that its main significance lay in forming a larger social and political unit and the discipline provided for that, and at the same time as far as possible to lift men above the worship of sensuous objects. Their energy was just adequate to attend to this particular special purpose, and as the mind had not yet come to a standard to attach any importance to any other existence than life on this earth, it was not for me to emphasize any other life."

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"When I came on earth," said Krishna, "These rituals and moral laws had already borne fruit. The mind had grown capable of attention and observation. The regulation of energy by inhibitions had produced surplus which was finding new channels of expenditure.

"The man was ready to delight in pure acts of perception without seeking any particular practical end. The objects which man had formally worshipped before, he now felt actually attracted to, recognising a quality in them that he called 'Beauty', and he felt

a subconscious relationship with them. It was my task specially to augment this function of the mind. I was also commanded to defend better stocks against the attacks of the lowest kinds who were called 'Rakhashes' because they were physically stronger and were able to destroy much more evolved people than themselves.

"I was also to provide and encourage the greatest need of the earth at that time, that is, of propagating and breeding the finer stocks.

"Personally, I had no need even of aesthetic life, which I had to live through for the sake of others; but the householder's life in which I had to have hundreds of queens and to arrange the bringing up of children, that was a task which almost taxed even my patience. But it was commanded and it had to be done; as you all know, that is our life. Our life is not to live like the ordinary man by the guidance of pleasure and pain, but to do what we are commanded to do.

"*In utter obedience lies our greatest bliss*. The activity one way or the other can possess no attraction for us. That is only mechanically performed. The feeling has no hand in it.

"That was also the particular period in which the leadership, political and religious, had united in one individual, passing on from the priest-class to the prince-class."

"Yes," said the Messenger, "It was your privilege to be the first blossom on the tree of humanity."

"I was just going to say that," said Solomon,

the Vine-yard prince, "because in my peoples, my father and I represented the same phase. It is not only a coincidence that a song is attributed to Krishna as well as to me, or that he was fond of the flute and I was fond of the harp as my father, or that we both could understand and interpret (what is so grossly misrepresented by our followers) the language of nature. People thought that the ant should speak to me in human-language, not in ant's language, and they still are discussing the point.

"My mission, too, was to augment aesthetics-perceptive life and also the analogous tasks of helping the preservation of human-kind by propagation, and defence against wilder stocks who spent all their energy in physical action; and like my brother Krishna, I had to incur multi-marriage and encourage that in others."

* * *

"I confess," said Socrates. "That my task was not so attractive, but I felt no less the joy to have been the recipient of the glorious 'Voice' that came to me. As it happened, the mind of man was just reaching that age at which its greatest need is a 'Gymnasium' for exercise and play to fit it for serious future business. The purpose of the age was to found the gymnasium for the mind. The very fact that 'ideals' were being talked about as more important than objects, was only to introduce the growing mind that was just old enough to play. Although the life still mainly

expressed itself in physical and physiological terms. 'Psyche' in reality was yet a myth.

"So much criticism has been levelled against this period by the world.

"Some admiring it beyond all proportion as the age of the greatest wisdom, and others running it down as the age of shallow talks, useless argumentation and sophistry. Very few have been able to detect its special function that it was to perform, in the growth of the mind. Indeed, it *was* the age of argumentation and sophists; but that was actually its purpose.

"There is also no end of talk about the position of woman at that time; this they discuss in the same spirit. They imagine that woman sprang out of the head of the Creator, fully grown and panoplied on the day of creation, and was to remain so in the same condition without change up to the day of resurrection. So they naturally ask, 'What was the position of women?' They cannot think that the position of women had to undergo constant change, like everything else; that women's growth was along the same lines from stage to stage as that of whole nature, and that of man himself.

"Do they ever ask 'what was the position of men?' Even in my time 80 per cent of them were slaves, worse off than women. They forget that man himself had been a child and a bad one at that. As my friend Zaradushtra said, in his time, he could not have dreamt of suggesting anything but one man's rule with a rod in hand, even if it be called a sceptre, whether in a family or in a state; the discipline had to be strict, as no moulding is done without fire and hammering.

"Woman is admittedly the last product. By woman I mean the female or that which conceives as a passive subject. The active motive power undoubtedly precedes it. The last form of this subjective passive receiver on earth is woman. That presages for her the last word, but, therefore, she was also to ripen later; as my friend the Messenger has rightly said, that towards the end of the world, the proportion of women will be tremendously in excess than it is at present. Pure subjectivity is naturally the last word in creation. The violence of motion must go on decreasing if ever the equilibration is to be reached.

"As my friend the Messenger clearly has said in the last revealed book, the creation starts by motion and ends by equilibration. The very condition of the soul, that he describes as the end of man on this earth, is when it has reached harmony and peace without a discord, and moves harmoniously and equipoised to its goal.

"This controversy about woman and her position is foolishly conceived and follows on an insufficient basis. This reminds me also of polygamy. As has been mentioned before, the begetting of children was the supremest duty of man, and the very fact that the infancy of woman was chosen for that period as the fittest co-existent, should give man a peep in the divine scheme and how it works. Polygamy and begetting of children begins to be less necessary, in proportion that woman is growing and finding her individuality. But the most amusing part is that the colour-blind common herd of the world thinks that the leaders of

men who had to live the life of the times in which they had to act and to incur multi-marriage as a pure duty for different reasons, personally enjoyed that experience.

"People will never understand that even a man who is capable of genuine aesthetic experience, delights in that experience so much more that he finds physical relationships gross and insufferable. That is as far as the Aesthete is concerned, whose mind has just begun to feel and perceive; but what about those who have grown-up minds and are capable of having the deepest conscious look into the very heart of nature and are therefore sources of profound revelation? The common herd thinks that it is a joy for those to live in physical relationships and enjoy them; what they call passionate life and what they themselves enjoy for want of having any mental life.

"But then the very attempt to make them understand is foolish; it is like teaching colour-perception to the colour-blind, which cannot be done.

"Likewise prattle continues on about poets and their position in human society.

"A poet reflects life. There are some poets who see only the lowest of life and they express it in a feeling form. These are reckless fools who run headlong downhill and carry the crowd with themselves. Is it a wonder then that in all the ages the leaders of men have warned the people against this danger?

"It is certainly right to say that the state of every period is judged by two circumstances. First, what the man thinks of himself, and second, what he thinks

of his God.

"I have already to some extent told you what the man thought of himself at my time, and as to his God, you know that he still worshipped the nature-gods. I could not do more at that time but just hint that there seemed to be a universal power above all these.

"But to return to my main theme, I repeat that my mission was to establish the gymnasium for the Mind in which it was to exercise itself to get ready for the future work in front of it."

"All honour to you my friend," said the Messenger, "It was not in vain that in the last book of revelation, one whole chapter is entitled after your people's name, only to direct the world's attention to your exercising ground."

* * *

"At the time when I appeared in my peoples," said Confucius, "They like all others at that period had too much concentrated on the service of ancestor-spirits; but were sadly wanting in the way of right action.

"It was not so much to wake up their cognition that was my task, as to regulate their action and direct it into fruitful channels, specially politically.

"Different peoples in the world, have been differently fitted by nature, for particular ends, and they are chosen to lead at those particular periods. For example. The people of the land to which my noble friend the Pathfinder belongs, have a predilection for cognising things, while my people's province

in general is action (not that, one can do without the other; it is only a matter of difference of proportion). That is the reason why at no time have they worshipped a wine god.

"Most people do not realise that everything in its place and season is useful. The same is the case with wine. To make an ordinary knife you have to heat the iron in the fire and beat it. Likewise the mind had to pass through the period of violent emotion and passion. Righteous passion was the main spring of beneficial action; the quality that my friend Krishna calls 'Rajas'.

"At that time the solemn partaking of wine was just the thing to augment that condition and wine was worshipped as God, as were worshipped other beneficial nature-powers that helped man. But supposing a knife that is formed and ground is passed once more through the fire? What will the fire and hammering do but destroy it?

"The people, however, insist that either wine was useful to humanity once for all, or it was bad from the very beginning, and they cannot grasp that everything is bound up with its time and place. Likewise it is amusing to hear people talk about the colour-difference in humanity. They conveniently forget that there was a time when the dark colour was adored.

"The best examples I can give you are our two most loved brothers, the Flute-prince and the Vine-yard prince, most beautiful and most adored by human beings themselves. They both in their time were called black. Dark was the colour that expressed

that passion which was the supremest quality then. The passion that produced aesthetics and art; the passion that had the first peep into nature's beauty and gave beauty to the world. They, too, forget that the dark beauty has been sung and sung by poets through all ages. I hear the Persian poet Hafiz, being fair himself, has lines to his credit in which he speaks about the 'black-skinned one on whom depends the sweetness of the world.' This he says of his beloved. Even the head of the Anglo-Saxon poets still dotes on the dark beauty.

"I have often wondered why the moderns don't call the black grape, that stores most of the sun, ugly. No doubt in certain respects the special beauty of the black has for the time-being, lived itself out, because passion and wine are themselves to-day at a discount and it has to be so.

"At present, the element in which the mind acts has to be the most unemotional and entirely free from passion. Anything that disturbs that, is undoubtedly, as my brother the Pathfinder said and the Messenger emphasized, a detrimental factor. But it must not be forgotten that the black is therefore disposed to act in the line of the greatest resistance (especially when it is being tempted with wine) and is therefore sublimating, and the time will come when the pressure will have shaped it into a diamond for the highest ends. *Everything has its time.* Great nature makes use of everything at its proper season when it is ripe for use.

"Ignorant is the man who thinks that he is

exclusively the best only because he happens to be the subject of use at a particular time as the White is now.

"To return to our subject, when 'Homa' and 'Soma' and Dionysus those wine-gods were objects of worship, even then, as I have already said, my people had no wine-god, because action was already their special characteristic. But very recently they easily fell prey to opium when it was offered to them, because it was a quietening agent providing the opposite side of their nature. The characteristic of the people I lived amongst being action, my task was to regulate and direct that action; while my friend Lao-tze provided suggestions for introspection. So we were in a sense complementary to each other."

It was now that the brown girl saw that the Great Pathfinder, who had sat calmly with his eyes closed and a suggestion of a smile on his lips, gently looked up and began to speak.

* * *

"This rumination has been really delightful," he said, "It has brought to my mind all the stages that I passed myself as an individual. The mind of man had a wonderful breeding. It is not generally understood that the evolution of the individual human and human-groups, and later of the whole humanity as one family, proceeded in a peculiar way. For example, even in the land in which I received birth, at the time when worship of a family-god and strictest ritual was and could be the only form of revealed

religion, there existed rare individuals who were far advanced on the path; but they were not even supposed either to carry the message to the masses or disclose their experience.

"And when the last message declared for the whole earth a universal author and God, there are human beings who are still at the lowest stage of family-god worship, and some at tribal-god worship, and can see no good outside their own tribe. While most of men bow at the altar of a national god with a national morality.

"The most noteworthy point is that as soon as a message is revealed and a certain stage is authoritatively initiated, it becomes a sin to traduce its behest and act contrary to it, from that period onward. What we call sin is undoubtedly the determinant factor in survival and the future life of an individual or a group.

"The pity is, that most times men interest themselves more in the person of the teacher than his message. That breeds confusion. That very thing happened in my case. Men interested themselves in all personal incidents of my life and concluded that in a sense, search of happiness was my aim. They could not even read in my life-story the fact that the feeling of discontent, which is unhappiness itself, had proved the most potent factor in my life. But for that unhappiness would I have sought anything at all? So unhappiness after all is not so bad. This fact, even to the modern man never seems to get clear.

"The unconscious mind that had begun to act

sub-consciously in aestheticism was now to grow fully conscious of 'self' and the 'Other' and that consciousness could never be acquired without the assistance of disappointment, discontent and pain. The over-emphasis that was laid, and necessarily laid at earlier stages on ritual, external forms and ceremony, propagation of species, personal possessions, had all done their work and had to be re-acted.

"The time had arrived that the human-mind which had learnt reverential 'Attention' was to learn 'Concentration' and instead of creating more stray relationships, could advance further only by entire 'Detachment' and 'introspection', away from every external object. In one word, enter the *Pupa-stage*. I was to initiate this chrysalis stage of the mind in the East as my honoured brother the Nazarene was to do a little later in the West.

"That which was called the Aryan-path at one time, was now in comparison with this new initiated stage, like wandering in the labyrinthine wood of ceremonies and relationships, and losing oneself in them, and was literally the un-Aryan or Nomad-way.

"The 'Mine' that originally had been the source of Ego-building was now hindering the further development of that Ego which was more or less identified with body and external relationship. It was no more necessary to cultivate the land or cultivate relationships but cultivate Self. This initiation concerned the individual as individual, and the universal only as was reflected in and for the particular; but not groups and masses as such and their interrelations. It dealt

with the individual 'mind in detachment'. To make the mind fully conscious of self, the expression had to be antithetical.

"Every act that was not consciously conceived and willed by the mind, that is, intentionally performed, for the purification of the mind itself, was to be inhibited and discounted. Form and routine were to be considered poisonous. Because complete self-consciousness of the mind as an entity was the sole aim. This was the only way how the mind could emerge full-fledged like a butterfly for future action. I even had to stop the worship of gods, because it was all a routine with my people. Besides, it divided man's mind between so many objects.

"Likewise I had to dissuade them from concerning themselves with a life beyond, because they were already too much concerned with it in a wrong way; conceiving it as a continuation of this life of pleasure. This false perspective was disturbing their view of the new relationship for which the mind was being prepared and which required every bit of their energy.

"As you all know, a great deal more could be said about this stage, which itself, more than any other, implied that unless the mind sets to realise the meaning of things and purifies and advances its own self, external forms or outside help could be of no use to it."

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"My mission and work were analogous to that of my brother the Pathfinder," said the Nazarene. "He, too, like me had to wander in body and appear

like a Nomad, and detach himself from hearth and home and relationships of all kinds. He had to carry nothing, possess nothing but his alms-bowl. It was not necessary for him, but it was necessary for his mission. The same with me.

"I plainly told my people that I had come to destroy their homes, and their relationships, and separate the father from the child, and the child from the mother.

"I told them that unless they detached themselves from hearth-gods, corn-gods, family-gods on one hand, and the external form and absorption in life on the earth, on the other hand, they could not be able to receive what was my Message. I was to draw the attention of the Israelites contrary to my brother the Pathfinder, to the future life, because unlike the Pathfinder's people, they had never thought of that at all. The expression of my mission had also to be in an antithetical form.

"I had to create a reaction against what they stuck to so obstinately. Their particularness about the routine, and the value they attached to observance of ceremony and form was such that I had to insist upon the contrary. So much attention was paid to trivial external actions and form, that I even had to make the beneficial external actions appear valueless, because 'detachment' and 'concentration' only on the mind activity was of essence. I plainly told them that if they committed adultery with the mind, even if their body did not partake in the sin, still the sin was there.

"They were so set on retaliating any wrong done to them that I had to react it by asking them to turn the other cheek; also, as the West knew nothing else but fighting amongst themselves, I had to give the special message of Love. But these were all *incidentals*, not the *essentials* of my mission. These only conduced to remove preliminary hindrances that obstructed the entrance to the way.

"With these local differences, the essence of my mission was exactly the same as that of my brother the Pathfinder in the East; namely, to initiate the mind to enter on the *Pupa* stage, and make it realise its individual conscious life distinct from that of the body. You cannot build a larger life without destroying the smaller first. To belong to the household of God necessitated the breaking of blood-relationships.

"The regard for ancestors and genealogies was so persistent that God had to be mentioned in the same relationship of a father, only that recognising this they might pay less regard to their worldly ancestors. *I was concerned only with the Individual, exactly as my brother the Pathfinder.*

"I was not to deal with the life of the masses as such, neither their political nor their social life was my objective. It was to prepare each mind as an individuality for its new life; that was my chief task. It was, therefore, that when I asked about things concerning social, political and family-life, I always displayed unconcern.

"*Man as an end in himself* was the way my mission

was to deal with him; and," he continued, turning to Moses, the leader of the Israelites, "I plainly told them that I had not come to destroy that which was already theirs, because without that this new teaching would have been impossible—but that the form and ritual that had been taught to them had abundantly done their work and were proving a hindrance. They had learnt their lesson by heart over and over, and without the second, there was no progress possible."

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"My honoured friends," said the Messenger, "To me this our meeting on earth has been a source of great joy, as you can easily understand. If not for any other reason, at least for this, that it fell to my lot to bring the message, that such a meeting was absolutely necessary for the further advance of man. This also explains my special mission—which is that it does not bring anything new to man, but says all what has been said before. But for you all, my message would not exist. I was only to repeat your expressions. But the combination of all these expressions in due proportion has opened an entirely new perspective to man.

"This present form as a synthesis, the summing up, in which all the particular messages are included and harmonised as parts of one whole, that was my mission. The last revelation, therefore, insists that there has been no religions but one religion. *It declares man to be an adult.*

"Yes," he continued, turning to the Pathfinder and the Nazarene, "Man having passed, owing to your kindness, through the pupa-stage, has reached his majority, and he is made responsible as an individual (man and woman alike), and the privilege of freedom of choice has been conferred upon him and her.

"No action, as you said, even in the pupa-stage, had any value for them, unless it was intentional, and the mind had consciously willed it. The 'detachment' that you insisted upon for development of an independent individuality, and without which the mind, as a free agent could never come into existence, is still as important as you made it, the only difference being, that armed with that detachment of individuality, man is to consider himself a part of the universal whole, not of those partial wholes and relationships from which the detachment of the pupa-stages was to rescue him.

"Family, neighbour, nation, all these are still there, but he has to live and act only for the Universal as such, which is his real origin and which will be his home. The last message re-confirms the ideal of ancestor-worship and home and hearth-worship, with the difference that only the real ancestor and the true home have been made the objects of worship.

"It sums up the whole position by the words: 'From God we are and to God we return.'

"As you, [my loved friend Nazarene, said that you came not to destroy but to confirm, so I had come to confirm every particle that was, is, and will be. Man has really worshipped his ancestors all the time.

Whether in his fathers, or animals, whether in trees, water or clay, whether in sun, the moon, 'Varuna' or 'Ether', it has been all ancestral worship. Only man's vision could not reach the true Ancestor of all things and their real Home. The man was young and the woman younger.

"The last revelation also retains their link with nature, which in form of so many distinct objects they worshipped. It directs the mind to observation and loving study of nature as a manifestation of One and the same object to whom such a study would lead man; and the deeper the peep is, the greater the Bliss.

"Most men are concerned with happiness. But you, my honoured brother, have already explained to them that happiness is not a thing to be sought in itself, because it is not a thing but a state, concomitant of certain conditions. It comes unasked as soon as those conditions are fulfilled, and the state which accompanies the greatest bliss is the true realisation by man of his Origin and Home. *Has he not felt that the highest joy comes to him only in moments of recognition, whether aesthetic or intellectual*?

"It is, therefore, that the last revelation says that the greatest bliss lies in the approach and vision of Him towards whom the whole universe moves, and in the finding of whom the entire universe has found its purpose and permanent rest. The words in which it describes this are that the creation is motion, destined and directed and its equilibration lies in its return to what it originated from. . That which hinders it to

reach this balance, is what is called sin or Evil, and that which favours its progress in right and destined direction is Good. It is also out of this balancing that Justice comes into existence.

"Human knowledge of the deity has developed also step by step. At all times even when man owned more gods than one, each person, family or group, always had only one favourite god, which they called their god. So in a sense monotheism has been always the religion of man.

"The last revelation, however, does not speak of one god or monotheism. It simply says 'God' not one or two or three; as God is not subject to numbers, but is beyond them.

"Still, man's counting cannot be despised. It is god given. It helps him to understand creation. Because, as we all know, creation is motion, and motion has its quantitative aspect. As soon as matter, which is only a form of Motion, evaporates into immaterial forms, only quantitative knowledge of it is possible to him, until he gets nearer to Reality beyond the instrumentality of what he calls Mind.

"Man, after worshipping natural objects, rose to worship ideal forms, as my friend Socrates knows very well. Ideal forms were made objects of adoration by man, but once again," he went on, turning to Manu and the Pathfinder, "each ideal attribute began to be embodied and represented into a separate personal God; because at that period the young mind could only grasp one attribute at a time.

"The three god-heads that my friend Manu gave to his people he knew to be three attributes of the manifested God, namely, the Creative, the Sustaining and the Equilibrating, or All-levelling, which in a crude form is put down as 'the destroying'. Each attribute itself was worshipped in form of a God. It is a wonder that for so many centuries, people have not found out that Brahma meaning 'Power' and Shiva meaning 'Merciful', while Vishnu meaning the 'All-pervading and sustaining', are mentioned as attributes of God in the first line of the last revelation.

"My beautiful friend Krishna here, is supposed to have incarnated the third attribute, viz., the sustaining element. In him that particular attribute of the divine found expression; so is Vishnu himself the embodiment of ideal attribute which belongs to manifestation itself. But the 'Real' is beyond them all. The last revelation suggests almost a hundred of such attributes of god as the generalisations of the manifestation and puts them down for realisation by man himself, necessary for an approach to the deity.

"When man has realised these attributes in himself, it is only then that man mirrors and represents the manifestation. For example 'Kingship'. The last revelation makes this a divine attribute. This merely means that it requires that each individual man and woman should realise in him and herself kingship, and instead of one king in a million, all men and women should become potential kings and queens, and possess qualities that an ideal ruler stands for.

"All attributes of the manifestation have to be

thus realised in each individual; *Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu have to be realised in man himself.*

"For those that desire to know more, the book itself is there.

"Certain other ideals, like ancestor and home, have persisted throughout human experience, because they have had intrinsic value for man. Light is one of these. From the beginning in one sense or the other, light has been looked upon as a representation of the divine. In fact, the name that most peoples gave to God originated from the root word, meaning 'Light'.

"My dear brother Zaradushtra here, emphasized that form; and the whole development has been once more confirmed in the last revelation in a more comprehensive and transcendental way; and the connotations of fire and light have been explained to those who can possibly understand them.

"It is thus that this message sums up every aspect that entered in all the messages delivered before it.

"The messages delivered from time to time were disseminated through the instrumentality of different classes of persons at different periods.

"The first was the priest, then the prince or soldier. The last revelation specially included the trader and worker. The travelling trader was to carry the message and at the same time create inter-relationships between different peoples. It was also, therefore, that in the last dispensation, travelling for so many purposes was suggested as the best teacher of man. But the type that it eulogises most, is that of the worker. All useful labour that conduces to the realisation of the

eternal purpose of man, it makes direct service and worship of God.

"Every insignificant act of man when performed with the intention to assist the universal purpose, is itself the best form of worship. The distinction of sacred and profane, or the pleasant and the painful that had been necessary and natural for an antithesis when the mind was entering the pupa-stage and the dualism it created, is once again made to disappear by a universal synthesis. There is nothing profane in itself so long as it is willed to serve the divine purpose. Nor is the unpleasant to be necessarily adopted and the pleasant to be avoided.

"The aim of the Antithesis was only to create the capacity. So that when the apparently pleasant was detrimental to the purpose, it could easily be controlled and eschewed and the unpleasant adopted instead. Likewise the retirement from the world which had become the rule in the East and the West after the initiation of the pupa-stage, was no more necessary. A certain sort of retirement is still suggested, but is meant only to be a preparation for snythetic universal life.

"Those who cannot understand this, have an example in the lives of all of us here, for even the Pathfinder and the great Nazarene had to pass through retirement like myself, but only as a preparation for future work. We all practically to the last day on earth actively worked in the world. Therefore, it does away with the retirment from the world in the old sense. Man has to love all things, as things of

God and must act for that love's sake in the world till to the last moment of his life.

"This message also necessarily includes faith in the unseen.

"It is amusing to hear some people who will have no 'blind faith'. As if the word faith itself did not imply belief in things not experienced before. The entire system of revealed religion was based on belief in things on authority of those that knew; and following them till one realised them for ones ownself. But for that Belief which in other words you call faith, the world would not have come so far; and but for faith still, till the world has realised all, it must perforce stand-still and perish."

* * *

Hardly were these words uttered when everything, including her companions, had vanished from the brown girl's view. Instead, she saw the heavy folds of History's gown, which began to shrink by and by till History himself stood before her.

"Here we are back again," he said smilingly, "I hope you enjoyed your ramble. I have only given you a peep at one fold of my gown. I hope you saw how the whole of humanity has been moving from stage to stage to a well-defined destination. I'll just remind you of the most interesting features of your afternoon walk.

"You could not have failed to note the Thesis of what is called Religion formulated by Zaradushtra and developed by others, also its Antithesis and likewise its Synthesis.

"Nor could you have missed to notice that the main task of revealed Religion has been to play the nurse, the governess, and the teacher of the human mind.

"It provided its needs in its infancy and early growth, it equipped its nursery and its gymnasium; then it looked to its education and discipline; lastly it inaugurated its 'Coming of Age' and furnished it with directions for its further progress to bring about consummation and a new birth.

"The other main features that you must have marked during your swift journey, I suppose, you would call 'Culture' and 'Civilization'.

"Very few men have understood that they are entirely distinct entities, however related and interdependent. 'Culture' deals with the individual as such, the unit of humanity, while civilization deals with combinations and groups of these individuals and their joint life. I need hardly say that these combinations depend upon the quality of the units.

"On the other hand, the 'group life' puts to test the culture of the human individual and furnishes it with a field to practise his lesson and consolidate his achievements. It also indirectly increases his capacity for creating harmonious relations with a larger and larger group. Till he is capable of comprehending the whole and living harmoniously as a part of it.

"You saw Zaradushtra, Manu and Moses; these are representative teachers of Civilization. Zaradushtra initiated family life. Manu joint family life and village-community; and Moses, the leader of the Israelites, was the first to provide requisites for a

national life to be built up out of tribes.

"By the by, this particular institution is still the most representative and up-to-date institution in the West. Greek city-life may also be mentioned as an institution falling between the last two, but it is far behind the 'Nation' of Moses.

"While Krishna, the Flute-prince, and Solomon the Vine-yard prince, on one hand, and the Nazarene and Buddha the Pathfinder on the other, represent the other phase, viz., that of Culture. Their main task was carefully to initiate a new step in the Culture of the individual as such and to prepare, educate and discipline him for a fuller life.

"Krishna and Solomon as you saw, initiated in their various groups, what we to-day call the aesthetic life. While Buddha and the Nazarene took up the culture of the conscious mind and advised ploughing, harrowing and sowing the mind itself. Their chief task was to make the mind master in its own house, capable of not only regulating and directing the physical and physiological activities, but also overcoming the demands of narrower relationship such as family, tribe and national life for the sake of the whole.

"This you must have been told was the pupa-stage of the mind, preparatory to become full-fledged to take part in the coming Synthesis. Later you must have come across the Synthesis itself. The distinctions that the antithesis had necessarily created, for example, those of this life as opposed to the next life; earth as opposed to the Kingdom of Heaven, inner life as

opposed to outer-life; mind as opposed to body, calling one sacred and the other profane, had to be synthesized.

"You must have also seen this dualism harmonised by creation of a new perspective in which everything found its new place and proportion, and formed part of the scheme for further culture of the mind; at the same time initiating a new group-life which you may call Supernationalism and Internationalism leading to the life of Humanity as one Organic Whole. This task as you saw, was performed by the Messenger Mohammed.

"Thus the culture and civilization were brought to a culmination point, assuring further progress of men towards his destination which you must have heard to be God himself.

"You must have noticed how in a particular sense, these Institutions have been developing side by side, like two trees, growing in two different places. One Indian and the other Semite.

"As far as Civilization is concerned, there has been no authoritative initiation in Indian system beyond joint family life and a village community initiated by Manu. While as far as culture is concerned, India has produced Krishna and Buddha, analogous to Solomon and the Nazarene, in the Semitic branch. The great Moses in the Semitic branch provided Nationalism as a new form of group-life, and the Messenger Mohammed introduced Supernationalism.

"Now let me tell you something that might really amuse you. You must have heard of the violent

controversy raging at present about the difference between the Aryan and the Semite? The mischief-makers, specially for the last century have made it a point to mis-represent me, which means, mis-represent the truth, forgetting that by these foolish pranks they are only putting their only lamp out and deceiving no one else; that in the end they will be the only sufferers, by leading themselves into marshes from which there is no getting out again.

"The fact is that these two people that I just now mentioned, are being wrongly classed as two entirely different peoples. Aryans and Semites are really one and the same people. At least so they were at the period when the word 'Aryan' came into existence and meant, as you have heard, nothing else but a plough-man. When the word 'Ar' was in common use as 'plough', they were actually still members of one and the same family. I will tell you how.

"You remember Ahura-mazd of Zaradushtra. 'Ahura' was only an ordinary phonetic transformation of 'Asura'. You know that 'Asura' was considered by the Indian Aryans a demon, just because Zoroaster had turned the 'Deva' which stood for God before, into Demon. Everyone knows that the word 'Assyrian' itself came from the word 'Ashur', the name of a prince who founded the race, and 'Ashur' is only the same word as 'Asura' or 'Ahura'.

"This is exactly in accordance with what actually happened at that period in India and elsewhere, that the names of divinities were being appropriated by princes; as Indria, the name of a God became

afterwards Raja Indra, likewise Shiva and Vishnu. So the Asura-God became the Ashur-prince. Not only that, but as the Indian word 'Arya' and the Greek word 'Aristos', so the Arabic word 'Aris', all three combinations from 'Ar' came to mean exactly the same, namely a nobleman.

"Likewise the word 'Dia' from which the words 'Dieu' and 'Day' are derived, is exactly the same word as 'Dia' in Arabic, which means light. So again you see that the two or three most characteristic words of Aryans, 'Dia', 'Asur' and 'Ar' are exactly in the same meaning represented in the Semitic languages. Their separation from the main stock is only long after the land-culture had been duly established and its importance realised, and not before.

"These are only a few hints which I give you for your future study of the subject, but you will clearly find, if you pursue it, that even 'Hamaite' and 'Semaite' is exactly the same word, pronounced differently as was even 'Homa' and 'Soma'.

"Now I must leave you; but I shall come back and disclose more of my secrets if I see that your interest survives and you seriously follow what you have seen and learnt to-day."

"But I have not found God yet," said the brown girl.

History laughed aloud, "Human-child is perverse," he said, "After all this you have not realised that the last consummation and the last act of the universe is to see God.

"You have forgotten that you already had glimpses

of God, although those of the groper who gets them through the sense of touch. It is just those glimpses in one form or the other that have sustained all life and make it progress towards its goal.

"Realization my child, Realization, which means obtaining nearer and nearer, profounder and profounder glimpses of God till He is seen in full glory."

* * *

The brown girl at this moment felt herself turning on the other side, and the voices of this world began to reach her subconscious mind.

With a jerk she got up and stared at the things in front of her. At this instant she heard a gentle tap at the door, and her maid reminding her that tea had been laid since a long time.

She mechanically left the divan and walked over to the sitting room. "What a dream," she whispered to herself.

A sudden remembrance of the one-eyed woman at the door brought all her normal activity back to her and instantly she ordered her maid to call the woman and her child in.

The maid felt as though she could not trust her ears, but a repetition of the order assured her that it must be executed.

The next moment the match-seller with her child sat at the table and the brown girl was pouring tea for them.

The poor woman could hardly trust her eyes. But

she soon made herself at home and began to enjoy her tea and cake.

The maid in the meanwhile brought the strawberries and cream and the little girl, being excited uttered a cry of delight, while her mother losing all control, suddenly opened her other eye too.

"Why!" cried the brown girl, "You can see with both your eyes!"

"That's because I'm so 'appy," was the reply; but the little girl was frankness itself and said:

"Mummy always sees with both eyes at 'ome."

THE END